

Sales of books and manuscripts

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Sotheby's summer English literature and history sale on July 23 and 24 produced some mixed results. It contained some important items which helped produce a total for the sale of just over £1,300,000, but over 10 per cent of the lots failed to find buyers. The unsold items included a first edition with a very early title-page of *Paradise Lost*; an important group of documents, apparently not fully known to eighteenth-century scholars, relating to the 1737 pirated edition of *Letters of Mr Pope*, and several of his friends; the unpublished autobiography "modern" version of Frederick Rolfe's *Don Quixote*; the early eighteenth-century archive of the papers of the first Duke of Manchester, and a controversial letter from Lord Elgin's chaplain to Mrs Hamilton Nisbet (Elgin's mother-in-law) describing the cir-

cumstances and the work of removing the marbles from the Parthenon (estimated at £15,000-£20,000).

The sale was in other respects unpredictable. The autograph manuscript of Jane Austen's dramatization of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* went just beyond its higher pre-sale estimate of £25,000 to Quaritch for £28,000. This play first appeared on the market nearly ten years ago when Sotheby's had it for sale and has become well known to Jane Austen scholars by the publication of a full facsimile and an edited version. The lot which preceded it in the sale, two volumes of manuscript music collected by the Austen family, with four songs copied by Jane Austen herself, a manuscript unknown to Jane Austen scholars and critics, was estimated to go for between £12,000 and £15,000 but failed to find a buyer.

There were few other surprises in the first day's sale. An apparently scandalous and unpublished letter from Dickens to Daniel Mac-

rise inviting him to Margate in 1841 ("There are conveniences of all kinds at Margate (do you take me?) and I know where they live"), which Sotheby's sternly took as "evidence of him [sic] evidently recommending the services of prostitutes" went to the autograph dealer John Wilson for £3,600 (estimate £2,000-£2,500). The important Yeats manuscript described in the TLS on July 17 more than doubled its higher pre-sale estimate, being bought by Cohen for £31,000.

In the second day's sale there were some further unexpected results. While the Manchester archive failed to sell, the papers of Lord Clifford of Chudleigh relating to Charles II's secret and notorious Treaty of Dover in 1670 did well to reach £285,000 having been estimated to go for between £300,000 and £350,000. Another Restoration scandal did far better: Quaritch paid £100,000 for a thirteen-volume collection of contemporary printed material concerning the Popish plot. Among

the 1,400 pamphlets, broadsides, proclamations, news-sheets, songs and poems were about 200 items not recorded in Wing, which may well therefore be unique; their presence undoubtedly helped to push the price for this collection, full of new matter for historians and bibliographers of the period, far beyond the higher pre-sale estimate of £30,000.

Two fine bindings did particularly well, both going to Quaritch again. The first of these, a copy of Clement of Alexandria's works published at Florence in 1550 and bound in London by the "Medallion Binder" for Edward VI, was expected to go for £15,000 at most, but the bidding stopped at £65,000. A seventeenth-century calligraphic manuscript of the statutes of Cambridge University elaborately but reasonably tastefully bound by the Cambridge binder John Houlden in heavily gilt blue morocco went for £29,000 (estimate £10,000-£12,000). None of these prices includes the buyer's premium.

TLS Classified

Rates: Classified Display - £10.15 pcc; Classified Linage - £2.00 per line. Minimum 3 lines - @ £6.00. Box number - £2.00. Copy deadlines: Classified display and Linage: Monday 10.00am in week of publication.

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*Common Services Library, Central London.

Natural Environment Research Council

Joint MERC-SERC Library, Swindon.

Ministry of Defence

Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, Hants. Command Library, Hong Kong. Defence Operational Analysis Establishment, West Byfleet, Surrey.

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

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Cover picture "Two boys with bicycles", Lewis County, Kentucky, 1975, is reproduced from Bill Burke's *Portraits*, with an essay by Raymond Carver (59pp, with 32 black-and-white plates, Collins Harvill, £15.00 0272056).

Reports from the new frontier

Michael Edwards

RICHARD MACHIN and CHRISTOPHER NORRIS (Editors) *Post-Structuralist Readings of English Poetry* 406pp. Cambridge University Press. £30 (paperback, £10.95). 0521 30605 1

The fury would not still be simmering in university English faculties up and down the land if the argument was only about literature. It is about politics, in the broad and narrow senses of the word. It is about the reliability of our notions of the self, of the reality which the self experiences, and of the language which mediates between them. Above all it is about whether or not we encounter coherence, and meaningfulness, when we focus on poems, plays or novels and, more importantly, on the world at large. The Ancients fear that, in their lives as much as in their reading, meaning is being snatched from them; the Moderns are impatient with the meanings being foisted on them. A great deal is at stake, and the underlying debate is philosophical, even religious.

Despite appearances, therefore, the disagreement does not ultimately concern the desirability or otherwise of theory. American New Critics such as R. P. Blackmur, Cleanth Brooks and John Crowe Ransom used to home, after all, to a technical vocabulary of "paradox" and "irony", just as contemporary deconstructionists explore "textuality", or "difference", and the most famous essays of the earlier movement had systematizing and interdictive titles like "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Heresy of Paraphrase". Nor are new ideas simply being opposed to old, since the New Critics argued against certain now fashionable assumptions which they found in the writings of the 1930s and 40s: the extension of the term "literature" to cover "anything written in words", for example, or the refusal to see anything in a poem beyond its relation to the society which produced it. Thought so often swings from side to side, and the post-structuralism of the 1980s, despite its more sophisticated and, I believe, more telling vocabulary, is, in certain areas at least, quite reactionary.

Post-Structuralist Readings of English Poetry seeks to enforce one side of the argument by a varied art of persuasion. It disarms its opponents, by a title which is dated ("readings" is a New Critical term), and which in some advanced circles would be considered racist ("English Poetry"). The contributors include no too obvious representatives of the critical Loony Left, though the essay on Keats is amiably loony *tout court*, and there is little of the Humpty-Dumpty school of criticism ("When I read a text, it means just what I choose it to mean"). There is brave talk, it is true, of threatening "the tradition of institutionalized criticism" and of working against "this history of repression"; there is even, more seriously, a reference to the "dead letters of canonized texts", which, however one tries to save it, seemingly has to mean that poems are inert without critics to kick them into life. But all this is from the introduction, which is more belligerent than most of the essays themselves, and which also argues against the pretensions of theory to being scientific, and against the notion that a text is self-enclosed and can give no access to the world outside. Above all, the book addresses itself to canonical works, even hyper-canonical ones like Milton's "On His Blindness" and Gray's "Elegy", rather than to Myra Pootle or to *EastEnders*. By meeting the challenge to use the various perspectives of post-structuralism to illuminate traditionally received poems, it takes the argument cleverly and, up to a point, responsibly on to the ground of "traditional" critics, in the attempt to win it there.

For many of the essayists, the opposition is New Criticism itself. One might have thought it rather an old school to be still reacting against, yet it was already centrally concerned with structure, and they have good reason to consider it structuralism to which they are "post". It conspicuously appeared, moreover, a rage for order. If saw contradictions everywhere and, following Coleridge and I. A. Richards, it looked to poetry to reconcile them. The features of poetry which it registered – paradox,

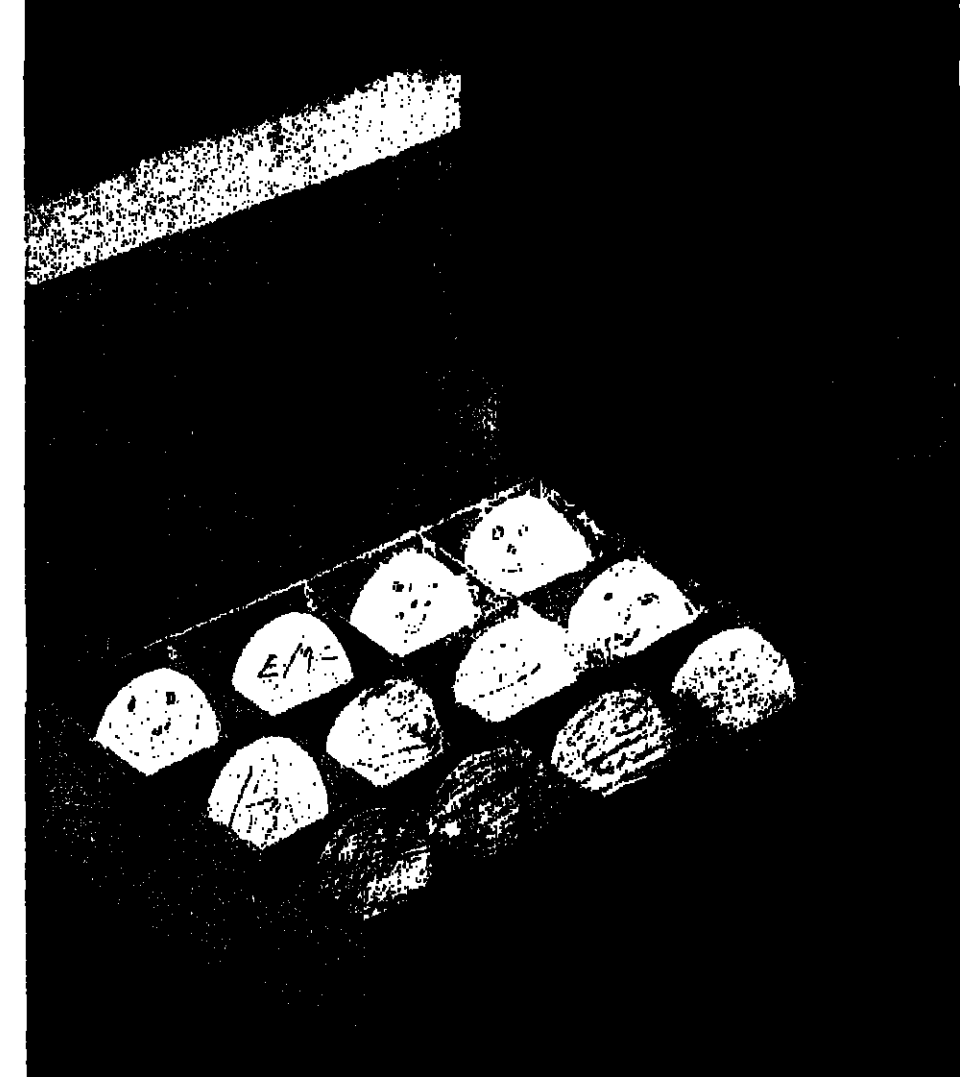
irony, ambiguity, tension – were all verbal means of controlling the unstable, the conflictory. The kind of analysis which it undertook can seem a heroic bid not to be over-mastered by incoherence, in the real or in writing. Post-structuralism refuses coherence, through a perception of more radical gaps and absences; it would appear to have the advantage of being often right.

Several of the issues are raised in J. Hillis Miller's analysis of a single poem by Hardy, "In Front of the Landscape". The analysis is useful in that it also traces the move from New Criticism to Post-Structuralism: it offers a close reading like those which critics have been writing for half a century, yet it discovers things which only a contemporary critic is likely to notice. First, a lack of "presence". "It appears to be a law", he writes, "in this poem, if not necessarily always in Hardy, that what you have in the present as an actual physical presence you do not really have." The ghosts to whom Hardy

in what he repeatedly says . . . of his poems' lack of a coherent philosophy.

Hardy's *Complete Poems*, for all their completeness, repudiate the reader's attempts to translate them "into an order satisfying to the mind".

As a fairly recent poet, Hardy may be thought too easily amenable to such readings. Jonathan Arac, however, proposes an even more fundamental incoherence in Wordsworth. Writing of *The Prelude*, he takes issue with M. H. Abrams's still basically new-critical presentation of the poem in *Natural Supernaturalism*. Whereas Abrams argues that Wordsworth achieves a "circular shape", "centred in love", a Romantic version of Christian and Neoplatonic commonplaces which figure the progress of the soul as a journey leading along a circuitous path to home, Arac is unwilling to accept the intention for the deed: "Wordsworth . . . wanted a reading of *The Prelude* that bound together all the parts, eclipsing



A detail from one of Helen Levitt's photographs from her *In the Street*: Chalk drawings and messages, New York City 1938–1948 (103pp, with 115 plates. Duke University Press. Paperback, £19.00 05223 0771 5).

failed to attend in the past obtrude on the scene, and so re-create the conditions for an endless series of poems each of which would return, too late, to a moment in the past in which he was inevitably attending to something prior: "It is as though Hardy goes through the world always out of phase." The ghostliness of Hardy's own presence in the world is specific to him, and one knows from his autobiography that he was aware of it. The suggestion, however, is that Hardy's is one particular way of experiencing what is always the case: the impossibility of a full, present relationship between a self which is elusive – being a linguistic "subject", perhaps, rather than a stable and individual identity – and a correspondingly elusive world.

Miller also finds in Hardy the want of a final, coherent word. It is a pity, I think, that he should have seized on the expression "fierce unreason" in the poem for a commentary like this: "Unreason: the word suggests an absence of *logos* in all its senses of reason, meaning, word, mind, measure, or ground"; the Derridean theory seems to have been lying in wait, determined to be used and eager for a peg to be hung on. A pity, since Miller's point is surely valid:

The unreadable oscillations in meaning . . . impose on the reader . . . the lack of a firm ground in a single meaning . . . This local ambiguity is matched on a larger scale by the "unreason" of the poem's inconsistency with one another, if Hardy is right (and he is)

imagination with love, but he could not in fact achieve it, and its not clear that we should." His argument begins with a devastating fact: "Wordsworth never wrote *The Recluse* [his intended masterpiece] and was dissatisfied by *The Prelude*", and proceeds to explore, movingly, Wordsworth's unending struggle with the work: "*The Prelude* is less a fixed text than a poem in process for some forty years." Even if there is some exaggeration, an overdoing of the pathos, in the picture of Wordsworth continuing "for the rest of his poetic life to wander within" his unfinished poem, the reading of the poem's inability to conclude is surely correct, and in no way diminishes it. Arac's judgment that Wordsworth was right not to attempt *The Recluse*, and not to pretend to the superior serenity which its writing would have entailed, is a mature one. His expression of it: "There is a humane liberation in letting go – even with indecision, anxiety, and guilt – such a project as *The Recluse*, in deferring the end, keeping suspended in receptivity", is itself humane, careful of the writer's own interests, and suggestive beyond the immediate context.

The Prelude, through its lack of finality, and through its being the prelude partly to itself but partly also to a great poem which does not exist, belongs to our modernity. It is Arac's post-structuralism that makes him sensitive to the revisions of the poem, and especially to the possibility of a revisionary process incapable of being concluded – to a text as, in one way or another, unfinished and unfinishable. His

essay, alert to theory yet empowered by literary insight, is exemplary.

The most fraught issue, however, is the possible relativity of all meanings, including those upon which we structure our most intimate sense of life. Here too Catherine Belsey is surely right in her preliminary remarks to the analysis of an even earlier poem, Marvell's "To his Coy Mistress": "People have always, we may reasonably assume, made love, and always died. But the meanings of love and death are discursively and historically specific." She is also justified in resisting the optimistic interpretation of the poem which sees the final section as celebrating the victory of love and life over time and death, and her suggestion that the poem marks "the tentative entry of the Cartesian *cogito* into the terrain of death" is persuasive. And this relativizing of things that we should like to believe permanent and universal is hardly novel: here in particular one realizes that post-structuralism is raising again the awkward questions about life and art which were already asked by the Modernists, especially Eliot and Joyce, and which ought to be familiar to critics; and also that its roots go even further back. In accepting the problematic of the "subject", and the loss of origin, in exposing the apparently natural as in fact socially constructed, and in observing the failure to hold together of what in another discourse would be called a full world, it bypasses the blandishments of Humanism to rediscover more troubled and more ancient speculations. Its feeling for the slippages between words and their objects recovers that old Christian belief as expressed in Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *Divine Weeks and Works*, that unlike Adam we cannot "impose" on reality "fit, sense-full Names". The belief corresponds to experience, if it is true that language offers a world, which it even transfigures, but fails to deliver – that the word giveth, and the word taketh away.

And yet, as a way of life and a way of writing about poetry, is post-structuralism not seriously flawed? It is disturbing that the deconstructionists here find fractured subjects, dubious enunciations, wherever they look. It is not difficult for Rob Johnson, in a nevertheless valuable essay, to show the rhetorical stratagems by which the "I" in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* "confronts, as other, a divisive element within itself in the hope of containing it", since the poem so clearly offers itself to such a reading. It is easy for Maud Ellmann to trace failures of identity and fissures of discourse in early poems of Eliot, since it has already been done, and since Eliot, at least in his poetry, anticipated many of the ideas of deconstruction and still has much to teach it – as he has a lot to teach psychoanalytic revisionism. The problem is not that the theories ought to be tested against greater resistance (they are), but that deconstruction, just like New Criticism, regularly answers certain needs, including the need to find something for criticism to do, and that, whoever or whatever its subject, it sees only what is useful for its own purpose.

When the purpose is political, one can expect to learn about the critic's allegiances but little about the poetry he is ostensibly studying. If New Criticism was somewhat glib in its determination to discover wholeness in contradictory material, deconstruction can be glib in its determination *not* to find it, and to expose the shabby ruses of poets for whom wholeness is desirable. If forcing coherence on a text serves the Right in its yearning for an organic society (does it?), the Left *has* to show that meaning is always a site of ideological struggle and all significations are contested, so as to satisfy a hunger for revolution. Once textual contradictions become merely those of bourgeois society, the role of Marxist deconstruction is simply to undo all texts. John Drakakis on *Much Ado About Nothing* and Christopher Norris on "The Rape of the Lock" play havoc with Shakespeare, Pope, and their critics, using arguments which are quite possibly irrefutable in their own terms but which sadly misfire once the terms are changed. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak trains a battery of theory on, again, Wordsworth, who stands convicted under it of not having found the correct solution – Marx's – to his country's ills. In Catherine Belsey's concluding sentences: "To read texts from the past in their historical difference is to . . . release the present – and the future –

from the determinism of the natural, and so to place them both rather more firmly in our hands", one sees the frustrated political commitment that, in these and other essays, has been diverted to the past, and one hardly needs to guess which historical and discursive practice has promoted that final delusion.

A second flaw is that incoherence is itself an unexamined assumption. Frances Ferguson suggests, rightly, I believe, that "criticism of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' reflects a craving for causes", and that Coleridge's own later gloss to the poem "finds significance and interpretability, but only by reading ahead of - or beyond - the main text"; yet the desire to find causation and interpretability, in our reading of poems as in our reading of life, still requires to be explained. The sense of contingency to which we may be forced cannot afford to dismiss without trying to understand it - in more than political terms - that need for order, for sense, which is equally part of our experi-

ence, and which confronts us with particular vehemence in poetry. There is a happy inconsistency in the fact that most of these studies are themselves perfectly coherent, with Aristotelian beginnings, middles and ends; the well-wrought urn of a post-structuralist essay acknowledges in itself the desire which in other kinds of criticism it belittles.

And then the use and the display of theory themselves present problems. The book does show that some varieties of post-structuralism can, when the critic is good enough, throw strong new light on to poetry. It does not, however, win the argument, and this is only in part because it is not in the nature of such arguments to be won or lost. It also shows that the mere application of contemporary theory produces readings which are mechanical and predictable. A few of the essays could have been computer-generated by keying in the terms of deconstructionist discourse (they reveal the pedagogic danger of this kind of collec-

tion), whereas the real work is done by critics who have assimilated what they need of the contemporary - and not necessarily one corner of it, nor to the exclusion of what is no longer contemporary - and who are not concerned to keep themselves methodologically pure and theoretically unassailable. Harold Bloom, for instance, finds unwonted ways into and out of Collins's "Ode to Fear", and succeeds in writing a technical and erudite study whose main characteristics are nevertheless its humanity and its concern for the poet's own practice. Geoffrey Hartman follows the theme of the evening star through poems from Akenside to the Romantics in the perspective of the anxiety of influence, so as to examine poetry "as it impinges on those who seek to continue it", and to find, for the critic of poetry, "a kind of history-writing compatible with its subject-matter".

The display of theory shows in the packaging of the book, which is disquieting through the

very fact that it directs attention to critical schools and their intramural antagonisms, as if *this* were where the literary debate is situated. The contributors are all, as far as I know, amateurs: they write about poetry because they like it (or some of them do), not because they are involved in writing it, and the poetry reader may well suspect, to adapt Marianne Moore, that there are things that are important beyond all this second fiddle. Yet according to Harold Bloom we "are currently in a literary situation where much critical theory and *poesis* is more on the frontier than most of our best poetry tends to be". He may be right; but, as Gabriel Josipovici reminded us recently (in *PV Review* 48), it is not critical polemics that will clarify the problems, but the work of artists. Faced with a headily academic volume like this, it is worth taking the trouble to find out if the best thinking about poetry is maybe still being done by poets in their poems, and the next-best thinking by poets in their essays.

Where logic rules

K. K. Ruthven

STRIN HAUGOM OLSEN
The End of Literary Theory
232pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0 521 33326 1

"The theory of literature", Northrop Frye wrote thirty years ago, "is as primary a humanistic and liberal pursuit as its practice." This view was shared by René Wellek and Austin Warren who in 1949 published the first book in English to approach literature systematically. Their term, like Frye's, was "theory of literature", which seemed to keep theory duly subordinate to literature; "literary theory", a reversal of that relationship, came later. Grounded originally in structural linguistics, literary theory broadened into critical theory with a political programme that would deconstruct, among other things, the liberal humanist aspirations of those who had pioneered the theory of literature. Resistance to that trajectory from a variety of pragmatists (known collectively as "the new pragmatism") has recently engendered the so-called anti-theory debate. Among its precursors are Susan Sontag's "Against Interpretation" (1964), Iain McGilchrist's *Against Criticism* (1982) and Paul de Man's "The Resistance to Theory" (1982); participants range from theory-loathing contributors to Laurence Lerner's *Reconstructing Literature* (1983) to theorists-who-are-not-theorists, like Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels.

This is the arena Stein Haugom Olsen signals he is entering with his book *The End of Literary Theory*, which collects a number of his essays in what he calls "literary aesthetics", the earliest of which dates back to 1973. Only in his final piece, however, the previously unpublished "Literary Theory and Literary Aesthetics", does he confront directly the theme encapsulated in the title of his book, and conclude that literary theory is "not only impossible but also unnecessary". Significantly his target is literary (not critical) theory, which he regards as "an obstacle rather than an aid in understanding the phenomenon of literature". It never occurs to him that what he demonizes as theory is a critique not so much of literature as of criticism, including that somewhat jaded kind of philosophical criticism he himself writes, with its fondness for formulations like "reference and truth are in themselves neither necessary nor sufficient for literary value".

Whereas most theorists nowadays assume that the term "literary" denotes a category of writing rather than an essence, Olsen habitually thinks, in essentialist terms, of "the literary work itself" as an object whose existence poses philosophical problems itemizable as "aesthetic perception, aesthetic judgement, authorial intention, truth and fiction". Here as in his earlier book, *The Structure of Literary Understanding* (1985), he confines his attention to a reification called "the" literary work, and sees literary studies as having no problems that cannot be framed logically and then solved in a series of "if... then" manoeuvres culminating in a "thus". Reconcilant texts which present

problems to this approach, such as novels that imbricate the factual with the fictional, are dismissed as "logically untidy". By comparison with his own procedural impeccability, other people's literary theory is found to be unprincipled in both senses of the word, and "authoritarian" in its deployment of discursive practices which result in "theoretical imperialism". As for deconstructive theory, that is simply "degenerate". Olsen sees it as his business to deal "in a philosophically responsible way" with theory, which appears to mean not mentioning Richard Rorty or arguing with Jacques Derrida, whose "impenetrable jargon" signifies an "ultimate barrenness". Olsen's prose conjures up through its absolute constructions a critic who is assured of certain certainties. We learn very quickly that there are two of this and three of that; that some things "never" occur and others "always"; that "only" this feature is relevant because "none" of the others counts. Statements Olsen approves of are "unquestionably" or "undoubtedly" true, and we are exhorted to keep the "right" distinctions in mind. At times the confidence is overwhelming in its naivety: "all" we need, apparently, is "an agreement on what is good and what is bad argument, an agreement on which literary judgements are worth preserving and which are not".

In Olsen's world, logic rules; and the materiality of literary studies is decontextualized, dehistoricized and depoliticized. So although he concedes that "the" literary text is embedded in "a literary institution", he does not think of such an institution as having any influence in

the determination of literary canons or the policing of non-canonical readings. No mention is made either of Frank Kermode's work in this area or of Stanley Fish's concept of interpretative communities; and Olsen is equally silent on left-wing accounts of the institution by many of the contributors to Peter Widdowson's *Re-Reading English* (1982). What Olsen means by an institution is much more abstract - "a practice... defined by a set of constitutive rules" - than the one made up of such contingencies as publishing houses, journals, syllabuses and academic appointments.

Because Olsen sees himself as dealing with literature rather than with criticism, he tends not to engage with individual critics and theorists. Paul de Man puts in an appearance to distinguish semiology from rhetoric, but only to be caught drawing conclusions which Olsen finds unwarranted or nonsensical; Hillis Miller is mentioned only because he wrote something in 1969 about *Bleak House*, and Harold Bloom as an example of an "unilluminating" critic. Marxist literary theory is said to exist in "many more or less sophisticated versions", none of which is thought worth engaging with. So Fredric Jameson's name never crops up, and Terry Eagleton is present only metonymically in a typical example of "Marxist parlance". Feminist criticism is never mentioned; but then, pronominal usage determines that authors and readers are always male. *The End of Literary Theory* might well be used to illustrate Eagleton's Law: "Hostility to theory usually means an opposition to other people's theories and an oblivion of one's own".

Goethe seem a readable or enjoyable novelist as opposed to a historically crucial one.

The most telling chapter in the book is the title-piece, on "The Problem of Speech Genres", of the early 1950s, which is essentially another episode in Bakhtin's quarrel with the inhuman abstraction of Saussurian linguistics and of the critical Formalism following from it. He makes a remarkable brief critique here of the elevation of the sentence to be the empirical unit of language-study (in Saussure it is, rather, the word), when what linguistics should have as its supreme category is the "utterance", or language as it is actually used, by one speaker to another or by a writer to readers. Bakhtin's "speech genres", which go all the way from single words such as oaths up to entire epics, are those relatively stable forms of "utterance" that make it feasible to codify real language-use at all and so represent a vital compromise between science and anarchy. Oddly therefore, "speech genres" are a constraint on our freedom in the spontaneous combination of words when we speak or write, a freedom that Bakhtin can very reasonably accuse the arch-legislator Saussure of exaggerating with his concept of *parole*. The "speech genres" are what connects the social with the linguistic, and that is the connection around which the whole of Bakhtin's brilliant and constructive thought turns. There are moments when he seems bent on a romantic and contra-

dictory search for a science of the individual but what he is in fact doing is to extend the limits of a science of language as far as they can go, until all that lies beyond is the uncatchable uniqueness of each actual speech-act. The glory and the difficulty of the utterance, for Bakhtin, is that there the impersonal "it" of a linguistic form enters the communicative chain by passing between a real "I" and a real "Thou"; his is a linguistics that must be always and inescapably in the vocative case.

The three remaining chapters of the book - "The Problem of the Text", "From Notes made in 1970-71" and "Methodology for the Human Sciences" - are from Bakhtin's last few years and in note-form only. They restate, not always quite clearly, his great themes of the inter-subjectivity of language, of the creativity of true understanding, of the inconclusiveness of all dialogue. And obsessed though he is with the temporality and relativism of every utterance, Bakhtin, a religious man, leaves room also for foundationalism, by indicating that there are some questions, if no answers, that lie on the far side of rhetoric:

The rhetorical dispute is a dispute in which it is important to gain victory over the opponent, not to approach the truth. This is the lowest form of rhetoric. In all higher forms one can reach solutions to questions that are capable of temporal, historical solutions, but not to ultimate questions (where rhetoric is impossible).

Concluding dialogue

John Sturrock

M. M. BAKHTIN
Speech Genres and other late essays
Translated by Vern W. McGee.
Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist.
177pp. Austin: University of Texas Press.
0 2927 2046 7

The six items translated here have come from a collection of essays by Bakhtin published in Russia four years after his death, in 1979. They have no one theme, they were written at widely different times of that extraordinary man's long working life, and not all of them are finished texts; so they make an anthology, not a book, confirming rather than extending what we already have of Bakhtin in English. But the translations are among the clearest that have been made of him and the collection itself would be a serviceable introduction to his most radical, compelling and mature ideas.

It begins with his answer to a question put to him in 1970 by the literary periodical *Novoy Mir*, as to what he thought of the current state of literary scholarship in the Soviet Union. It is too placid and too cautious, is Bakhtin's reply, clinging corroboratively to facts out of a fear of hypothesis. In short, there is no critical dia-

logue, and no dialogue, for Bakhtin, means no good. He presses also for literature to be studied not alone but as one element among others in a given historical culture, because only then can firm, plausible connections be made between material conditions and their literary reflection. The way from social facts to literary texts lies through language and language is by no means exclusively, or even mainly a literary medium.

There is next a forty-page section from one of Bakhtin's lost books, on "The Bildungsroman", acclaimed by him as that form of the novel in which "real historical time" and "real historical man" were successfully assimilated into fiction. These pages are mainly in praise of Goethe and are poignant survivors of the much larger manuscript which went up in smoke during the war when Bakhtin used it for rolling cigarettes. Goethe is an important novelist in his eyes for presenting us for the first time with an "emergent" or evolutionary world, where the present appears as indissoluble from a human past and as pointing towards a human future. This magisterial continuity Bakhtin talks of as being "the fullness of time" and writers must be party to it if they are to earn his full respect, for otherwise, like Walter Scott, they will be shown to be guilty in their Romanticism of cutting the past off from the present. Given Bakhtin's priorities, one can hardly complain that he does nothing here to make

Ever onward and upward

A. J. Sherman

ARMAND HAMMER and NEIL LYNDON
Hammer: Witness to history
544pp. Simon and Schuster. £14.95.
0 671 65458 6

Like the Fabergé eggs Armand Hammer has profitably admired, bought and sold, this exercise in autobiography contains many a semi-hidden jewel. Apparently closed doors are forever opening at his expert touch, revealing the world's most powerful decision-makers talking informally of their aims and anxieties, their physical ailments, their hopes for a place in history. Cormorant collector that he is, Dr Hammer has in his eighty-eight years gathered a very sizeable hoard of such moments, and takes transparent pleasure in sharing many with his readers, dispensing *en passant* his own brand of brisk wisdom, compounded of rich experience and, as he tells us, Kipling's "If", Dale Carnegie and Marcus Aurelius.

Not much given to introspection or repining - "regrets and recriminations only hurt your soul" - Dr Hammer has cheerfully taken on all challenges, leaving in his wake exhausted younger colleagues, vast numbers of business and personal acquaintances, many admirers and not a few enemies in high and low places. "One thing led to another" throughout his life: he has sold patent medicines, asbestos, pencils, works of art, furs, cattle and, most notably, oil: his Occidental Petroleum is now among the world's major international oil giants. Sweeping aside objections, usually from lawyers, Hammer has energetically pursued opportunities wherever he found them, whether in America just emerging from Prohibition, where he made a fortune in selling first barrels, then whisky; or the Soviet Union in the earliest days of Lenin's New Economic Policy; or the Libya of King Idris and the Israel of Menahem Begin. Wherever he went, he reports, "proving experts wrong has always been one of my most enjoyable recreations". The sole occasion on which he reproaches himself for a faint heart is when he recalls having briefly laid siege to a gracious but impervious Helen Hayes,

then appearing on Broadway as a dazzling Mary, Queen of Scots.

Perhaps Hammer's most famous coup was his initial interview in 1921 with Lenin. His account of that meeting, presumably well honed and oft retold, shows us a Lenin of enormous charisma, who would hold his face close when talking, "his left eye squinting, but his right eye transfixing you as if it were trying to pierce your innermost soul". Hammer left that encounter feeling "embraced, enveloped, as if I could trust him completely"; and in fact subsequently found Lenin a man of his word, disposed to give this restless young American virtually *carte blanche*, amid the shambles of the Soviet Union's post-Civil War economy, to import tractors and export furs, asbestos, works of art, almost anything that might bring in desperately needed foreign exchange.

Despite a family heritage of uncritical socialism - his father was a devout Communist, disillusioned only very late in life - Hammer was from his early youth a robust and unapologetic champion of capitalism, a quality his Soviet hosts and patrons have apparently always appreciated. Hammer has throughout his career both preached and embodied the doctrine of *détente* through trade: in the process he has met and made use of several generations of Soviet leaders, for whom seeing the man who spoke face to face with Lenin is clearly as near to religious experience as members of the Politburo can permit themselves. For his part, Hammer appears equally at home with others of the great and occasionally good: shoals of high-powered corporate executives and their scurrying lawyers; millionaires by the limousine-load; showgirls and art dealers and surgeons; Muanmar Gaddafi, Richard Nixon, Golda Meir, the Shah of Iran, Franklin Roosevelt, Will Rogers, Deng Xiaoping and very many more. To all of these Hammer dispenses concrete fatherly advice and persistent encouragement to seek world peace; from them he imbues great invigorating draughts of that heady elixir, proximity to real power.

Hammer's book abounds in vividly observed details: Brezhnev's colossal consumption of vodka and penchant for kissing friends not *à la russe* on the cheek, but on the lips; the Shah's "almost inhuman suavity and self-control" and utter deviousness; Khrushchev ploughing his

way through a laden buffet, dropping a strawberry and casually kicking it under the table; Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother cheerfully agreeing to leave a party, thus allowing Hammer to depart, after he had explained that he and his wife were scheduled to fly to Beijing later that evening. Throughout many anecdotes about rivalries in the art world and ruthless infighting in board rooms, one feels Hammer's exultation in the chase; his tone is enthusiastic, his prose often disarmingly boyish: "she knocked me out... was I smitten!" When he writes that he enjoys business "for its challenge and difficulty and drama" we believe him. He was trained in medicine, but Hammer could never have been satisfied with his father's life as a New York family doctor.

Like so many men driven to constant achievement in what is called the real world, Hammer has suffered losses and disappointments in his personal life: he avoids the temptation to omit these, and is relatively frank in detailing the failures of his first two marriages, both his father's and his son's indictments on charges of manslaughter, and a decade when he was frequently in physical pain and underwent repeated major surgery. Blessed with abundant energy, an apparently indestructible constitution, and above all no doubts, Hammer has rebounded from these setbacks, as well as brushes of his own with regulatory authorities of several varieties, and has gone on to business, social and diplomatic heights perhaps only dimly perceived in his ambitious youth.

Whether or not Hammer has played as pivotal a role in East-West relations as he ascribes to himself, his tireless personal shuttling between Moscow and Washington compels admiration for its single-mindedness in pursuit of nuclear disarmament. He has pursued with equal tenacity, and many millions of research dollars, a perhaps equally elusive goal, victory over cancer. His benefactions to cancer research, United World Colleges and other institutions clearly give him much pleasure, as does the kudos that comes his way in the wake of all this largesse. "You never fully own anything unless you have given it away", he intones, and we are made privy to his plans for disposing of his very extensive art collections to a variety of museums.

Objectively monstrous

Anne Chisholm

BARBARA BRANDEN
The Passion of Ayn Rand
442pp. W. H. Allen. £14.95.
0 491 03197 1

Behind this biography lies a curious story of personal and intellectual disenchantment. The author, Barbara Branden, was for many years in thrall to her subject, the best-selling American novelist and self-styled philosopher, Ayn (pronounced to rhyme with "mine") Rand, who told Branden what to think and do and conducted a clandestine affair with her husband. *The Passion of Ayn Rand* is thus part testimonial, part revenge. It is over-written and repetitive, but apparently candid about those concerned; and - much more interesting - throws valuable light on some ominous strands in the popular culture and political thought of the United States. Rand's "philosophy", which she invented in the 1950s and christened "Objectivism", is still disturbingly influential in America today.

She was born Alisa Rosenbaum in 1905 in St Petersburg, and grew up in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in poverty and in fear. She was intelligent, ambitious and wilful, and early on she decided to trust no one but herself and no ideas except her own. Having derived from light music and Hollywood films an idea of America as essentially joyful and free, she determined to live there. And when, in 1926, some cousins in Chicago invited her to visit them she did so and never returned to Russia. She rapidly learned English (which she always spoke with a heavy Russian accent) and conceived the ambition of becoming a writer and working in Hollywood. By an extraordinary

chance, she was taken up by Cecil B. de Mille, who was amused by her studio-struck intensity, nicknamed her "Caviar", and gave her work as an extra in one of his epics. There she fastened on a mild, good-looking actor named Frank O'Connor, and determined to turn him into her ideal man. "Femininity is hero-worship" was one of her slogans. They were married in 1929, ensuring her American citizenship, and she dominated him for fifty years.

In 1936, using the name Ayn Rand for the first time, she published a novel, *We the Living* - a melodramatic romance, set in Russia, intended, as her biographer puts it, to transform "the base metal of her wretched years in Russia into the shining gold of a novel". It was derided on publication for its inflated prose, murky intellectual themes and overwrought anti-Bolshevism. Rand herself ascribed this failure, as she always ascribed criticism, to fellow travellers political enemies. She called the travelling political enemies. She called the 1930s the "red decade"; and Branden follows her lead. Struggling on, in 1943 she published a second novel, *The Fountainhead*, whose hero is Roark, an architect of genius who blows up his masterpiece rather than allow it to be changed. In Roark, Rand embodies her ideas about the nobility of the heroic individual, the beneficent power of self-interest as opposed to collectivism, and the weakening effects of selfishness. The villain, Toohey, who is not surprisingly a critic, she modelled in part on Professor Harold Laski of the London School of Economics, whom she described after hearing him lecture as "a cheap little scribe of collectivism".

With this novel, and the subsequent *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand struck a chord in the American psyche. What she offered was a fictionalized moral endorsement of individualism and capitalism - a fervent justification of the pursuit of private needs and profits. Altruism she

called "the second-hand's weapon for enslaving the creator". The film rights to her novels sold well, and with the proceeds she bought a mink coat and a brooch shaped like a dollar sign. She appeared as a friendly witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee, wrote a manual advising Hollywood employers how to avoid Communist penetration of the entertainment industry, and worked for "a union of intellectuals to take a philosophical and moral stand for capitalism". In the 1950s, with the help of the present biographer and her then husband, Nathaniel Branden, two eager acolytes twenty-five years her junior, she set up an institute in New York to propagate the Rand gospel, her private blend of philosophy, economics and psychology. But the cult was destroyed (as cults often are) from within. Rand had an affair with Branden, and forced both her own husband and her lover's wife to keep it secret. When Branden deserted her, Rand destroyed the institute - which bore his name - as punishment.

Mrs Branden tries hard to be fair to Rand, but cannot disguise her pathetically monstrous behaviour. The biography provides copious evidence that no amount of scandal or absurd conviction of the rightness could dent Rand's conviction of the individual, the beneficent power of self-interest as opposed to collectivism, and the weakening effects of selfishness. The villain, Toohey, who is not surprisingly a critic, she modelled in part on Professor Harold Laski of the London School of Economics, whom she described after hearing him lecture as "a cheap little scribe of collectivism".

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David Papineau

WILLIAM FINNEGAN
Crossing the Line: A year in the land of apartheid
418pp. Hamish Hamilton. £14.95.
0241 123399
JOHN CARR
An Act of Immorality
304pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £14.95.
0340 399562
MARK MATHABANE
Kaffir Boy: Growing out of apartheid
345pp. Bodley Head/Pan. £12.95 (paperback, £3.50).
0370 310586

Sympathetic commentators sometimes claim that the Afrikaner people of South Africa are motivated not by race but by culture. The Afrikaners' first concern, so the argument goes, is not to favour whites by oppressing blacks, but to preserve the Afrikaners' language, religion, and fragile cultural identity in the face of extreme hostility both within and without South Africa.

This cultural theory of Afrikanerdom harks back to the Boer War, and to international liberal sympathy for the Boers' fight against gold-greedy British imperialism. Today, nearly a century later, it helps the contemporary liberal mind to make some kind of sense of the South African régime. At least behind the horrors of apartheid there lies a recognizable human motive. However, the theory is given the lie by the Afrikaners' attitudes to the "Cape Coloureds". These are the three million people of mixed ancestry who live mostly in the Cape Province. Prominent exiles include the poet and activist Dennis Brutus, the pianist Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), and the cricketer Basil D'Oliveira. Racially, the Coloureds are fairly heterogeneous, containing varying contributions from white settlers, Negro and Malay slaves, and indigenous Hottentots. But culturally they are unified, since like the descendants of black slaves in North America, they have acquired the language and religion of their white masters. Ninety per cent of the Coloureds have Afrikaans as their mother tongue. And their largest religious denomination is the Dutch Reformed Church, the Church of the white Afrikaners.

As far as cultural identity goes, the Cape Coloureds are simply brown Afrikaners. But, far from enrolling the Coloureds as cultural allies, the Afrikaners have persistently rejected them. The Afrikaner National Party was elected to power in 1948 on a platform of racial purity for its poor white power base. Among its first laws were the Population Registration Act, which defined the difference between "White" and "Coloured", and the Group Areas Act, which decreed that the two groups should live separately. And throughout the early 1950s the Nationalists fought a long constitutional battle to remove qualified Coloured voters from the general electoral roll.

The laws of South Africa do not mix well with the laws of genetics. Since many Coloureds are quite white, and many Whites have a fair share of black genes, children often turn out differently from their parents. (I can remember the press coverage of one notorious case from my own schooldays. Sandra Laing, an eleven-year-old White, was sent home from school and reclassified as Coloured because of her looks. After a long legal fight her white parents managed to get her reclassified as White again. Eventually, she applied to be reclassified yet again, as African, so that she could marry the man she was living with.) Only a few South Africans, though, get directly caught up in the absurdities of racial reclassification.

On another occasion Finnegan was trying to get a class of thirteen-year-olds to discuss a speech by Zinzi Mandela, daughter of Nelson Mandela.

I asked if they knew who Nelson Mandela was. The children all avoided my gaze; no one answered. I asked Hester (the class monitor). She stood and said, very quietly, "Yes, sir. They know."

Three months into the school year the political alignments became clearer. Non-white children throughout South Africa staged a school boycott in protest at discriminatory education. ("We don't want no education; we don't want no thought control," they sang, taking the Pink Floyd into the big parade and on to the banned list.) Many of the older children and the younger staff members at Grassy Park turned out to be sophisticated political organizers. Finnegan corrected his earlier impressions. But he still had things to learn. When the riot police were coming he told his class to stay in their room. A colleague explained the inappropriateness of this strategy: "I cannot tell these children just to sit quietly and wait for the riot police to come in and shoot them."

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you understand how much the Boers hate these children."

The Afrikaner attitude to Coloureds was perhaps most clearly displayed in the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950, which outlawed sex between Whites and Coloureds (sex between Whites and Africans had been illegal since 1927). Various instrumental justifications were sometimes offered for this law, such as that it would protect young Coloured women from White men. But the name of the Act gives the game away. To the Afrikaners inter-racial sex is morally defiling. In more than a dozen cases white men charged under the Immorality Act have chosen to kill themselves rather than live with the stain. The implication, of course, and one which has understandably rankled with the Coloured community, is that the very existence of the Coloureds is a shameful reminder of past sins.

John Carr's *An Act of Immorality* relates an autobiographical episode from the Cape Town of the 1960s. Carr, an Englishman then in his

introduced to the English liberals who employed his grandmother as a gardener. Among the cast-offs they bequeathed him was a tennis racket. He turned out to be as good at tennis as he was at schoolwork, and made more white friends, including the American tennis player Stan Smith, who suggested he apply for tennis scholarships to American colleges. *Kaffir Boy* ends with Mathabane's departure to enrol for the fall semester in 1978 at Limestone College, Gaffney, South Carolina.

Mathabane's details do not always inspire confidence. (Steven Biko was battered by the Police in Port Elizabeth, not Durban; he was then moved to Pretoria, not Johannesburg.) But he does make clear the limited choices facing young blacks in South Africa today. One option is political activity, with the attendant risk of detention or being forced underground. A number of Mathabane's contemporaries took this path after the township riots of 1976. Alternatively you can keep your head down and hope for a steady job. With luck and qualifications you might even end up as a white-collar supervisor with a half-way respectable salary.

The "total strategy" of the present South African government is to encourage the steady workers while crushing political resistance. By making concessions it hopes to create a stable black bourgeoisie with a stake in the present system. This has led to some genuine changes. The right of African workers to own property and live permanently in urban areas has been expanded. The Immorality Act was finally repealed in 1985 as an unnecessary embarrassment. But the strategy seems unlikely to succeed. Perhaps the first wave of skilled black workers will be grateful for a few crumbs from the white table. But in the longer term the creation of a black middle class is only likely to fuel dissatisfaction with the little the Afrikaners are prepared to concede.

In the Afrikaner mind there is one greater dishonour than a black neighbour or sexual partner. The ultimate degradation is taking orders from a black person. The reforms of the past few years have shown that the Afrikaner leadership is not entirely inflexible. And there are certainly some genuine, if politically marginal, liberals among the more internationally minded Afrikaners. But even in its most *verligte* moments the National Party has never countenanced blacks being placed in positions of power over whites. The whole South African structure of employment, and the whole apparatus of separate bantustans and chambers of parliament, is carefully designed to ensure that no black is ever directly superior to any white.

The recent history of Zimbabwe, where most of the whites are English-speaking, provides an illuminating contrast. When they held power, the English Rhodesians ran as discriminatory a system as South Africa. And of course they did not hand over power willingly. But now they have been forced to cede control, most have grudgingly accommodated to their new masters. To the white Rhodesians the acceptance of black rule has been a matter of minimizing economic losses, not the overthrow of a moral order.

The English-speaking white minority in South Africa would no doubt similarly be prepared to settle if the costs of preserving apartheid became too high. But the Afrikaners are unlikely to be swayed by any such utilitarian calculations. In the Boer War the Afrikaner commandos who kept on fighting till the end were called *bittereinders* (as opposed to the *hensoppers*, the "hands-uppers" who surrendered). A lot more Afrikaners are likely to be *bittereinders* in the fight against black rule. The partial preservation of their economic privileges would be little compensation for the destruction of their moral universe.

None of the young blacks who appear in either Finnegan's or Mathabane's books has any doubt about the intentions of the Afrikaners. Without exception they view talk of reform as a subterfuge designed to deflect dissent. They recognize that if there is to be real change, it will only come from armed resistance. And they have no illusions but that the fighting, when it does come, will be to a bitter end. The prospect is not a happy one. Nor is it made any better by Western governments who allow themselves to be persuaded that the Afrikaners are susceptible to rational pressure.

The secrets of Greece

Patrick Leigh Fermor

PENELOPETREMAINE
Under Helicon
98pp. Padstow: Tabb House. £9.95.
0907018548

In his foreword to *Under Helicon*, Penelope Tremayne's fellow Cornishman A. L. Rowse points out that she is an unusual, adventurous and highly gifted person. He pays a deserved compliment to *Below the Tide* (1958), her book on the troubles in Cyprus, where she worked for the Red Cross; he also mentions her courage under imprisonment and extreme danger at the hands of Tamil guerrillas in Sri Lanka. Only the first of these experiences makes a brief and oblique entry into the pages of her new book, whose theme springs from a lifelong passion for the Mediterranean Sea in general and the Greek-speaking world in particular. History, literature and aesthetic feeling have been her guides, and several famous places appear; but these, thanks to her bent for unorthodox travel, are outnumbered by regions much less trodden.

An overmastering instinct drives her to places that are remote and hard of access, to widely scattered islands, precipitous shores and steep and daunting mountain ranges. Excellent and unusual photographs, in colour and in black-and-white, mostly taken by Guy Gravett, accompany the author's keen-eyed and evocative descriptions in prose, to which, on every other page, a poem acts as corollary. The first of these, prompted by a line of Baudelaire's, is written in French as an *exercice de style*; the next is called "Sommieres", and, as this is the Provencal habitat of Lawrence Durrell, it must surely commemorate a visit to her old Cyprus contemporary. No Durrell influence shows in her own poems, however.

These derive from an earlier generation, long before she was born, a couple of wars ago and more, and they have little in common with the more guarded utterances of today. In spite of her love of the classics and mythology, the author is unabashedly romantic. I do not know who her presiding influences were, but the names that rather surprisingly, and perhaps wrongly, float across this reader's mind are Landor, Shelley, Swinburne, Chesterton, Belloc, Rudyard Kipling, Flecker and Housman, with even, once or twice, a touch of Julian Grenfell.

The skin of Big Apple

Stephen Brook

JAN MORRIS
Manhattan '45
273pp. Faber. £12.50.
0371 136842

Jan Morris's celebration of Manhattan focuses on a single year, when the triumphalism of the island was most in evidence, and its underside kept to the shadows. In 1945, in the aftermath of the Second World War, while the cities of Europe lay in ruins, Manhattan was riding high and would continue to do so for the rest of the decade: it was a place where anything seemed possible.

Jan Morris does not confine her portrait to the *annus mirabilis* alone. Her deft sketches present us with features of Manhattan that have remained stable for decades - the Plaza Hotel, the Fulton Street Fish Market, Radio City, the cab-driver's spiel. Her pace is brisk, and we are whisked from cops to clubs to ferry boats to Harlem nightspots in a matter of pages. At times she adopts a snapshot technique that sets before us the cut of a dress or the panned stiffness of a Wall Street boardroom. Yet while one cannot help admiring the breadth of her vision, one is left with a strong impression of superficiality. Moreover, the vision is at its core sentimental, as is immediately apparent from her breathless description of the GIs returning from the war on the section on "New York's Finest", the police force which, if Miss Morris is to be believed, was viewed with affection by all and sundry even if its members did accept the occasional bribe and crack a few skulls.

Ivor Herbert, travel writer for the *Mail on Sunday* since 1983, incorporates forty-four accounts (by no means all previously printed) of places visited, from Bruges to Lake Navashta and from Arizona to Hong Kong, in *Herbert's Travels* (206pp, with 37 black-and-white photographs. Pelham. £12.95. 0 7027 1742 6), with tourist information added, and arranged in three sections, "Weekend Breaks", "European Holidays" (including Turkey, in Asia) and "Long Haul".

Side-tracks in the jungle

John Ure

ALEX SHUMATOFF
In Southern Light
239pp. Hutchinson. £12.95.
009 1700701

In *Southern Light* has many of the ingredients of a first-class travel book. The author, Alex Shumatoff, is adventurous and observant; he writes knowledgeably about aspects of anthropology and the natural sciences; he has chosen to go to two little-known and intriguing areas of the world: a remote tributary of the Amazon, and the Ituri forest in the heart of Central Africa; he is an experienced staff writer for the *New Yorker* who brings an agile pen and lively political sense to the curious and menacing milieu into which he ventures; he appears to be a talented linguist and has a happy capacity to make friends with the aid of his guitar.

Yet somehow the book falls short of what, with all these advantages, might have been hoped for it. The fault is partly structural: the book is two long travelogues (made to feel all the longer by the lack of any chapter or other breaks) which, apart from both being concerned with jungle travel in particularly uncomfortable circumstances, really have little relation to each other. A more serious flaw is that the travelogues themselves are too disjointed. One is no sooner becoming concerned about how the author can possibly surmount the particular physical or logistical problems confronting him, than one is side-tracked by a long disquisition about the yodelling habits of the pygmies, or the life of the *bdoto* (a male mermaid), or the alleged iniquities of the local administration in Zaïre. These digressions should add depth and texture to Shumatoff's tale, but in practice they tend to unfocus the reader's attention, possibly because the author does not project a strong enough image of himself as naturalist (vide Gerald Durrell), scholar (vide Leigh Fermor) or adventurer (vide Colonel Fawcett).

Beyond the water the Mand stretches, in the morning like the bluest of smoke-wreaths, utterly insubstantial and remote, though it is scarcely a dozen miles away; and later seeming to hang above the liquid violets and blues and peacock-greens of the sea, in a haze the colour of roses and peachstones, looking like some vast range - Pamir or Himalaya - seen from immensely far away, its bare granitic crests glistening as if with snow.

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Leaves from a triptych

Jennifer Uglow

DAN JACOBSON
Her Story
143pp. Deutsch. £8.95.
0233 981160

Suspense, surprise, the lure of speculation – these are the pleasures which pull the reader deeper and deeper into Dan Jacobson's new novel. With artful simplicity the author draws us into first one story, then a second, then a third, and a shadowy, more famous fourth. Each reflects and refracts the illuminations of the others. It is a book which asks for our full participation, ending with one final challenging question.

Yet *Her Story* is no intellectual game, rather a vivid triptych portraying fundamental issues: the nature of belief – or credulity; the compulsion to search for truth; the urge to establish continuity through "stories". It also asserts the right (and obligation) of fiction to cross boundaries. The first surprise it offers is the swift recognition that if the author were a woman *Her Story* would at once be hailed as an archetypal feminist novel, dealing as it does in the coinage of lies and silences, marginality, the iconography and experience of maternal love, a chain of women exchanging glances across the ages. Indeed its very structure – self-enclosed, doubling, spiralling – reads like a conscious formal trespass.

Her Story contains a novel within a novel. The opening carries us to the twenty-third century, where a local historian presents the recently discovered work of a certain Celia Dinan who lived and died mysteriously a hundred and fifty years before – just as we now "discover" our lost women writers. Jacobson enjoys inventing the future – the character of which is made effortlessly clear by the historian's need to explain the context of her research. And despite her high-tech apparatus, the historian's patient style and busybody, sensible-shoe personality are so familiar that when she signs off, her name gives one of the novel's minor enjoyable shocks. She inhabits no post-holocaust desert but a recognizable Britain, its topography enduring beneath new administrative areas, its old hierarchies solid as rock beneath the veil of a strict Muslim rule – rather similar to the régime of Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale*.

In the midst of the discovered ephemera lies

a treasure, hand-written (you may be relieved or aghast to know) in that writers' staple, a series of W. H. Smith orange notebooks. They contain a novel, *Her Story*, which hurries us back to an unnamed heroine in an unnamed land. We know that Celia had written a thesis on "The Image of the Madonna in Fifteenth Century Flemish Art", providing lingering images which direct her backward gaze:

Paintings in frames, marble gestures of hope and sorrow, wooden or waxen dolls with gilt crowns on their heads and lilies at their bare feet, mosaics flickering like fish in the light and shadow of a hundred candles . . . Depictions of her are everywhere. Be-seechings without number go up to her daily. Her stories are known to everyone. But you? Nobody has ever heard of you. You have no name. It is too late to give you one now.

Who then is this other woman, this possible "kinswoman" of the Virgin Mary? We may guess, but are not allowed to know until the final twist, which it would be wrong – since this is in many ways a mystery story – to divulge here. Enough to say that she too is the mother of a boy child, the object of her total adoration, whose birth changes her life, making her a passive instrument of biology and biblical history. This baby, "a mighty force shrunk to a frail morsel", remains a being strange to its bearer, whose destiny she follows but fails to understand.

It can be no coincidence that Celia's locked, corroded trunk of papers is found in the attic of a girl's school, deep in a valley, bounded by foliage and fences, where the future wives of the state élite "may be sure of remaining in the seclusion demanded of them by the religion which they and their husbands-to-be follow". The Islam of the future ensures, as firmly as the structures of Celia's day (and our own), or the Judaic customs of the first century, that the woman's story remains hidden and untold. In all three eras men take the lead, convinced of their own destinies: women's scepticism is subverted both by their ethic of submission and their capacity to love. Celia's father, Lord Dinan (Dit-non? Shaman?) is a famous surgeon, "inventor of an artificial elbow-joint, known as the Dinan Hinge . . . of course no longer in use". He wins the title, applauding epithets of *The Times*; his wife remains in obscurity. Yet the private letters between mother and daughter survive to suggest a different side of the famous men. Celia's lover Eric Hirn is yet another "healer", whose lucrative Californian commune is broken up in a

police raid which occasions the death of their infant son. Within her novel, the heroine's son disappears as a boy, to return again (or so she wants to believe) as a wandering magician, a "layer-on of hands". Driven by her intense love she stays with him to the end. But as is the case with Hirn, the "word" he pronounces is just what it seems, baffling gibberish: "Was that all? What had been done? What had been the lesson of his visit? The benefit of it? Had he brought consolation or mockery?" His pedlar follower gives not bread but stones: "Round green stones intricately veined with black, these were, like an internal organ from a slaughtered animal."

At one level the inner *Her Story* is Celia's self-healing exploration of the loss of her child and her painful involvement with men of power. On another it is a rewriting of a chronicle shifting the original focus. For while the actions of such men make "history", "her-story" is a scribble in the margin, a flicker on the television news. Jacobson uses the structure of his novel to track the emergence of "female stories", with all their gaps and guesswork; *Her Story* moves inward from the quiet third-person narrative of history, through the direct, intense questioning of novel and notebook, down to the private fantasy, the "dreaming disease" which conjures a willed reality.

Since his early South African stories Dan Jacobson has found the gulf between cultures compelling and awesome. In "The Box", for example, a young boy gazes amazed at a weeping black servant: "They were a strange twilight people . . . beyond an uncrossable barrier. Now Jan had crossed the barrier. He was crying as I might cry. There was no difference between us at all. He was human and he was crying." These unheard cries, unrecognized feelings, unspoken oppressions have been his central preoccupation, related to a concern for justice in all its aspects. He has used his considerable art to cross frontiers of race, time and now gender – always remembering that the act of crossing is itself, in part, his subject. The mediator is often present in his fiction – the historian here, the translator in *The Confessions of Josef Baisz*, the gloating ghost of Yonadab in *The Rape of Tamar* (an earlier return to the fringes of scripture). *Her Story* is not self-conscious but self-aware, reveling in its twists and turns, constantly undermining our expectations and drawing on springs of thought and feeling which make it a novel of stirring power, one to delight in, reflect on and remember.

ginning distanced, by virtue of personality, from his environment, and the Temple cult, so deeply loved by Hüré's Mary, emerges in an especially lurid light. The impact of Geza Vermes's *Jesus the Jew*, though it is emphasized in the preface, has not been all it might have been; this Jesus perceives himself very early as the "son of God", in a sense which seems to go far beyond that in which comparable Jewish charismatic used the term. That is not surprising, for Merchant explains that the problem for him is to write about a young man who was also God. The novel closes with an assertion of Christ's share in a divine unity. And the theme is brought out by an elevated style and a reverential tone, which are in marked contrast with Hüré's taste for the ordinary – even the banal: "Jesus would be asleep after having been breaded". For Merchant, there is real homelessness only in the worlds of nature and of crafts – plastering the walls of a new upper room, the scraping of freshly prepared parchment by Jesus' mentor, the old scribe Lazar, and of course the work of the carpenter.

Merchant is contemplative; Hüré provides a compelling human drama, and a book which would be easily the more readable, were it not for its undistinguished translation. It is particularly disturbing that proper names of all kinds, and Schulte terms, have been left in their French form, giving us such English monstrosities as, among others, Alhrouges, Janée, Xyste Squate, Ouebrax, and, time and again, Essamians for the sect known in this country as Essenes. These blunders diminish the authority of an ambitious project. The net effect is that we may feel happiest with the story not according to Merchant or Hüré but St Luke.

Moelwyn Merchant's Jesus is from the be-

In the attic

Lucy Ellmann

SARAH BAYLIS
Utrillo's Mother
246pp. Pandora. £9.95.
0863581161

"I've always been a liar – it runs in my family." With this unpromising statement, Suzanne Valadon begins her reminiscences in the late Sarah Baylis's novel about the Post-Impressionist painter. Valadon is near the end of her life, solitary and disgruntled, ruminating on her past as her last tooth rattles down the drain. Baylis is determined to prevent other noteworthy features of this artist from suffering a similar fate and, by means of fact and fiction, and a literary style to match the savagery of Valadon's own work, sets about resurrecting her. Although Baylis wanders fancifully into erogenous and erroneous zones where the most intrepid biographer might fear to tread, and unashamedly makes a lot up, her depiction of wails and strays in late nineteenth-century France strikes a harshly realistic note: everyone is either starving, arguing, drinking or masturbating.

During a comfortless rural childhood, Valadon displays some of her future gumption in defeating the local paedophile and braving a gypsy camp in order to be told her unfortunate fortune: "You'll be a success – if you don't go mad first." Her downtrodden mother eventually assaults her aristocratic employers and has to take Valadon to Paris. They probably made this journey by train but Baylis has them more colourfully towed along canals for three weeks. They arrive in Montmartre just in time to witness the carnage of the Commune.

Valadon's own rebellious streak is fed by a few years at convent school, where she learns about sex. In a bad mood one day, she daubs the walls and columns of Notre Dame with crude symbols of genitalia and feels better, having made the decision not to be a "fucking vessel of purity". She has also discovered art's power to alleviate the drudgery of her life, which explains her ability later on to come home and draw after a fourteen-hour day. At ten, her education over, she is sent to work at a hat factory where she refuses the boss her virginity and is promptly dismissed. Several arduous jobs follow until she finds her way into circus work, tending poodles and the sexual needs of a clown (Baylis ignores Valadon's claim to have been a trapeze artiste). Here she at last meets other artists, who come to the circus to draw acrobats and buy sex. Much to her mother's chagrin, Valadon later models for them, and although Baylis describes the indignities of the trade with some poignancy, Valadon's modelling for such artists as Lautree and Puvis de Chavannes must have been of some benefit to her as a self-taught artist.

Valadon's difficulties as a young female artist, and the supposed conspiracy to relegate her to a disadvantageous slot in art history since her death, are rich soil for the feminist writer. Baylis finds the art world's behaviour towards Valadon to have been patronizing in the worst sense, and has Valadon lamenting the birth of Maurice Utrillo too, whose work was preferred to her own as soon as she had taught him to paint. Valadon's somewhat legendary promiscuity is attributed to her need for free art supplies and the society of fellow painters. Her only satisfying sexual encounters are with women, as if in revenge for the arrogance of her male contemporaries and the misogyny and half-hearted compassion for the poor which she finds in their work ("Washer-women were the rage. They had taken over from shepherdesses"). When Valadon tells them that one of their circle raped a model, she is reprimanded with the words, "Man is the hunter, woman his game."

Though Valadon lived with her mother throughout her life, Baylis is resolved not to romanticize this relationship either. They stumble around attic rooms in sullen silence and mutual indifference much of the time. From an early age, Valadon finds her mother repulsive and "bovine", especially when seen from behind; and yet she climbs into bed with her on occasion, like a child. It makes painful reading, but forms a natural link with Valadon's troubles with her charmless son, in whom Baylis feels she bred her own destruction.

Running through the recipes

Adam Mars-Jones

SHENA MACKAY
Dreams of Dead Women's Handbags
160pp. Heinemann. £10.95.
043440442

Moving as it does from the sombre to the absurdly trivial without becoming unambiguously comic, the splendid title of Shena Mackay's new collection well represents the total range of the book. Sometimes she invokes the simplicities of melodrama or pathos, sometimes she transforms them at the last moment into some more sophisticated compound.

The title story is unusual in falling off from the eerie confidence of its opening: "It was a black evening bag sequined with salt. . . . This image, the wreckage of a dream beached on the morning, would not float away; as empty as an open shell, the black bivalve emitted a silent howl of despair; clouds passed through its mirror." In the story, the dreamer – a writer of mystery novels – imagines the dream to be a fiction-germ stirring, and waits for it to root itself in a plot or a cast of characters. Mackay's parallel attempt to derive a story from the dream produces some fine passages of surrealistic unease, as the mystery writer encounters minor madness and coincidence on her way by train to a reading of her work, but lapses into an almost wilful baldness when the dream turns out to be a memory of the writer's innocent killing of her parents as a child – not

the sort of thing that even the most professionally productive unconscious could mistake for the first glimmerings of Detective Inspector Hartshorn's next case.

The short story is in many ways an unforgiving form, which calls like any tricky recipe for careful regulation of temperature and timing. But a story can also be a salvageable soufflé, whose sagging texture can be restored by a gust of invention even on the way to the table. An example is the story "Violets and Strawberries in the Snow", an account of an alcoholic ex-writer spending Christmas in a mental hospital, which is almost pure cliché throughout. The writer is visited by his three daughters, who put a brave face on things until one of them inadvertently sums up the situation with the words, "Satsumas are horrible this year." After their visit the writer sits down to write a story with that title: "It would not be very good, he knew, but at least it would come from that pulpy, sodden satsuma that was all that remained of his heart." This is Mackay at her most over-explicit, her least respectful of the balance that is struck in any story between the said and the unsaid.

But the story is saved by her manipulation of her own more oblique title phrase, first when the daughters enter: "they came in, smelling of fresh air and rain, with unseasonal daffodils and chocolates, like children, he thought, in a fairytale, sent by their cruel stepmother up the mountainside to find violets and strawberries in the snow". There is a piercing poignancy in the way the character sees his children's visit

more easily in terms of the fulfilment of a bizarre quest than as a natural expression of feelings.

Then, after they have left, the phrase recurs with its terms reversed, as the character sees in memory "his children smiling and waving at the door, their resolute backs as they walked to the car concealing their wounds under their coats, forgiving and brave, and carrying his own weak and dissolute genes in their young and beautiful bodies. Violets and strawberries in the snow."

Most of these stories are brief, little more than ten pages. "All the Pubs in Soho" is by some way the longest and the most substantial. It tells the story of summer 1965 as it affects eight-year-old Joe, bullied and ignored at home, who finds something like friendship with Arthur and Guido, a couple who move into a cottage in the village. There is nothing about a child's point of view likely to defeat a writer of Shena Mackay's quality, but she seems reluctant in general to commit herself – either to fully inhabiting a character's point of view or to maintaining a fixed distance from it – in a way that hampers this particular story. The first paragraph, for instance, describes with an adult's aesthetic scrupulousness (flowers resembling "blue and copper velvety kitten's faces freaked with black") Joe's misinterpretation of the words "those Moody pansies", which refer in fact to Arthur and Guido. Since Joe's age has yet to be revealed, the effect is curiously irrelevant and confusing.

There is more to be revealed about Joe than

age. Joe is actually Josephine, but refers to herself – and is referred to by the narrative voice – as a boy. Arthur and Guido guess this secret before the reader is likely to do so. Joe's resentment of her gender and the limitations it imposes is focused on her academic future, since the school her parents have chosen for her has a uniform which will prevent her from equivocating. She will be fatally a tomboy in a skirt.

The story builds to a climax as the school term approaches, and as Arthur and Guido's stay in the village comes to an abrupt end. But along the way Shena Mackay produces some of her few clumsy sentences:

The child from a house where a veneer of anxiety lay on every surface like dust, where at any moment a bark might rip up comics and scatter toys, where a fist thumping the table might make cups leap in fear vomiting their contents on to the tablecloth, just as Joe had once been sick when his father caught the side of his head with his knuckles and where Mum's forehead wrinkled like the skin on coona and her chin puckered in fear and plication, expected every domestic disclosure between two adults to degenerate into a battle in which by being co-opted on one side, he was considered the enemy by the other, and so always ended as the loser whoever else was in power when a truce was called.

Even this disastrously rambling sentence is not a ruin but a ramshackle, uninhabitable mansion that could easily be subdivided into a number of splendid flats. Shena Mackay's faults are intermittent, her virtues – her eye, her inventiveness – constant. They give a reliable pleasure.

Sorting out the arrangements

Deborah Singmaster

ANITA BROOKNER
A Friend from England
205pp. Cape. £9.95.
0224024434

Do not be misled by Giorgione's "The Tempest" on the dust-jacket of Anita Brookner's seventh novel; there is no art historian within. The characters in *A Friend from England* inhabit a solidly philistine world which revolves around a melancholy but well-intentioned family. The Livingstones live in a lushly furnished Wimbledon villa: the uxorious Oscar, a retired accountant, his anxious wife Dorrie ("I hope I did the right thing"), and their lumpyish twenty-seven-year-old unmarried daughter Heather. Into this claustrophobic circle comes the narrator, Rachel (she is not given a surname), a client of Oscar's before he won the football pools. Rachel assumes that she has been taken up by the Livingstones because they regard her as a suitable and necessary street-wise chaperone for Heather. In fact the two girls have nothing in common and nothing to say to each other. Heather reminds Rachel

of a heifer: "Heifers are also usually associated with sacrifice. The difficulty with Heather seemed to be that she lacked the emotional equipment even for sacrifice." Rachel is only willing to take Heather on because she is genuinely fond of her parents and values them as "fixed points of reference in a slipping universe".

Heather, however, is hastily and expensively bundled into marriage with Michael, son of "Colonel" Teddy Sandberg who deals in time-share properties in Spain and exudes unflagging "manufactured bonhomie". The omens for this union are not good; Rachel senses that "something is missing", and after the wedding loses touch with the Livingstones.

An only child and an orphan, living alone and given to "feral wanderings" around Notting Hill Gate, Rachel appears at first to be the archetypal Brookner female. But she is very different from Edith Hope, Fanny Hinton or Kitty Maule. The uniform, too, has changed from the pearl-grey tailor-made dresses to a far tougher garb – trench coat, mackintosh, leather boots; and, unlike those earlier heroines, she is hard up, depending on a third share in a small bookshop for her income. She makes few references to her past but we learn

that she has never fully recovered from the loss of her parents and that she has had a disillusioning love affair with a married man. To shield herself against any further emotional pain, she evolves a chilling philosophy based on what she thinks of as enlightened principles. "I favour sensible arrangements . . . No bourgeois sentiments for me, no noble passions. The surface, the surface only." And an additional quirk of her personality is that she suffers from aquaphobia. She has nightmares about drowning; there is a traumatic visit to a swimming-pool; even the weather, almost always wet in this union, afflicts her physically as if she had "an allergy to the dripping skies".

When Heather's marriage fails, Rachel is drawn back into the Livingstones' lives. She learns with disgust of Heather's affair with an Italian, "a foreign adventure of the most banal kind". Dorrie is now ill and Rachel fears that she may become a surrogate daughter to the ageing couple, burdened with the sort of emotional attachment she shuns. She tries to persuade Heather to stay with her parents, abandon her Italian lover and live as she, Rachel, does, "by the light of reason". When Heather ignores this advice and goes off to Venice, Rachel attempts to bring her back, even

though to her Venice is "the ultimate nightmare, a city filled with water".

There are moments of disappointment in the novel. Rachel's confrontations with Heather fail to set the heart pounding because they depend on dialogue, and dialogue – apart from the Restoration elegance of Edith's exchanges with Mr Neville in *Hotel du Lac* – is Anita Brookner's one weakness. (The compelling *Family and Friends* contains almost no dialogue.) There is also a feeling of unease about the Livingstones. Meticulously observed and beautifully exhibited, like rare lepidoptera, they are nevertheless intrinsically boring, and no amount of careful description can make them more than splendid specimens of bourgeois decency. Rachel is a far more interesting creation: repellently cold and cerebral, she becomes increasingly sinister as the book progresses. The agony of her final self-recognition does not evoke our sympathy, but her blundering insensitivity as she thrusts herself into the disintegrating lives of the Livingstones is mesmerizing. Though not one of Anita Brookner's best novels, *A Friend from England* is far more successful than her last, *Misalliance*, and reconfirms one's faith in this formidably talented writer.

The voice of the Madonna

Tessa Rajak

JACQUELINE SAVERIA HURÉ
I Mary, Daughter of Israel: A fictional memoir
Translated by Nina de Voogd
298pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297789759
MOELWYN MERCHANT
Jesus: Nazareth to Jerusalem
426pp. Swansong. Davies. £10.95.
0715406941

I Mary, Daughter of Israel, by the wife of a former French ambassador to Israel, is a novel in the form of an autobiographical retrospect on her life by Mary, mother of Jesus; *Jesus*, by a retired Professor of English who is also a sculptor and a clergyman, is about Jesus himself. An oblique approach is often an advantage in a historical novel, with the focus or vantage-point located in an unexpected figure or an unfamiliar aspect of events. Jesus, one is tempted to say, has been "done" at least four times (for each of the Gospel writers had his own distinct concerns). Mary can have none of the sophisticated self-consciousness of the cultured Roman in Marguerite Yourcenar's *Memoirs of Ildrian*, but she had to orient herself towards a supreme, and highly surprising drama. For Jacqueline Saveria Huré, she becomes, but only by degrees, almost the first Christian, and perhaps the first pilgrim, when her curiosity takes her to sites like the well of Sychar – where Christ had had significant encounters (for example, with the Samaritan woman) during a phase of his life from which she, as a mere woman, had been excluded.

Huré's book benefits by extending the story beyond the Gospels at both ends. The aged Mary looks back on her own childhood; much more recently, after the Crucifixion, she had been one of the Jerusalem Church community, which is in part documented in the Acts of the Apostles. This last is a plausible and happy invention. Throughout, Huré is fearless in creating situation and character. The most striking is the visit of Judas Iscariot's mother to Mary ("he did not do what he did for money"), and the questioning of Mary by the young Greek, Luke, eager to find out about the early years. Good research has fertilized conjecture.

But what, above all, lends imaginative power and coherence to a work of historical fiction is the asking of pressing questions about how things really were. Huré seeks to understand female acceptance of subservience and pleasure in obedience in a male-dominated society. She is also concerned with the workings of an extended-family network: James and the other so-called siblings of Jesus are in reality cousins, treated as children of the same household; which, in fact, is an old scholarly interpretation. This may, however, not be entirely appropriate, since recent studies suggest a nuclear-family structure for the Galilee of the period. Most importantly, Huré enquires how Jesus, his family, and even his Palestinian followers could be, and remain, not Christians but normal Jews – the paradox at the heart of the drama. Her protagonists are convincing first-century Jews of Pharisaic sympathy, and the implications of the new insights dawn slowly and incompletely. We fully grasp Jesus as "Rabbi".

Moelwyn Merchant's Jesus is from the be-

Café noir

Christopher Hawtree

MILES GIBSON
Vinegar Soup
264pp. Heinemann. £10.95.
0434291323

Miles Gibson's is a world in which the ordinary assumes grotesque aspects without becoming any the less credible – as *The Sandman* and *Dancing with Mermaids* showed. *Vinegar Soup* begins with an unusually painful birth – although Gibson's subject is hardly the dignity of womanhood:

Her breasts creaked. She was fat and tired and constricted. While, under her skin, Frank yawned and stretched soft bones, a wet and wrinkled goblin. During the day he floated upside down in the warm gravy, deafened by the gurgle of Hazel's intestines. At night he anchored beneath her ribcage, eyes closed, face crumpled in concentration, anxiously trying to grow.

Duly born – "a day fit only for funerals and a bowl of women" – he is abandoned. The metaphors that attended his gestation – "a

savory pudding of heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, stomach, bladder, skin and bone" – become a part of his life when he finds himself growing up in a greasy spoon, whose owner, Gilbert, flouts the health regulations no more than is customary in such establishments.

The atmosphere is not the most cordial: "She raised her arm and threw the bomb at his head. The egg broke above Gilbert's left eye. He cried out in surprise and twisted away. The shell slipped from his face on a snail's trail of slime and puddled his shoulder. He touched his eye with his fingertips and turned to Olive, his mouth open, the eye socket full of translucent jelly" Gilbert has long harboured dreams of an existence far from such a place. He is haunted by a sense that life is elsewhere; it's all going on and he's not taking part. An old crony, Sam Pilchard, for example, has been knocking about the globe, has seen it all, and is now holed up, a none too good man in Africa. "Girls prancing naked to the sound of drums, breasts bouncing, buttocks swelling, feet stamping the red dust. Out there, somewhere, Sam Pilchard, happy, drunk and fat as a walrus, asleep in a heathen's hammock." (It is a curiosity of the novel that the narrative dispenses with the first "as" in a comparison while

the characters are scrupulous in adhering to it.) Meanwhile, Gilbert has only *Wobble* for solace – surely the best title for a magazine given over to pornographic display since *Whitehouse*.

In due course Olive, his tormentor, meets an unfortunate end, one which allows the others to fulfil this dream of walking across baking earth beneath an equatorial sun. Things do not augur well at Customs, where the waitress, Veronica's, "tiny brassières excited less interest than Gilbert's Bovril and he was obliged to leave several bottles behind him as a goodwill gesture".

Africa broadens Gilbert's knowledge and destroys his preconceptions. "By thunder, but she's a big girl. Royal buttocks. You have to be careful with big women. Dangerous when excited. Strong as elephants. Lose control and they stamp you to death. That's why you see them with tiny men. Small. Nimble. Fast on their feet." Events, in their way, become as grotesque as any in the café, so much so that they seem less those of a trip to Africa than a voyage through the mind – without being as portentous as that phrase might imply. To convey the quality of Gibson's novel would be difficult without copying down more of his rich, but not over-egged prose, (*Vinegar Soup*

contains many short sentences. This could be monotonous. In other hands, that is.) Something of it might be suggested by saying that it is as though Martin Amis had been written by Henry Green and David Cook.

Scottish Arts Council

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The Literature Director
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19 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh EH2 4DF
Tel: (031) 226 6051

American notes

Christopher Hitchens

A democratic and republican country will always have more or less agonizing problems of rank and precedence, and the febrile swirl of fashion in America has a great deal to do with the eternal question of who is in and out, up or down, coming or going. When in *The Acceptance World* St John Clarke scornfully says of "a novelist who sells very well and you can probably guess the name" that he is "the kind of man who knows about as much about *placement* as to send the wife of a younger son of a marquess in to dinner before the daughter of an earl married to a commoner", one recognizes the sentiment as well as doubting the actual utterance of the mouthful. But what is a publisher, agent, editor or hostess in New York to do with a novelist who may sell very well and have a guessable name but be hopelessly yet indefinitely "out"?

It is partly in order to solve this nagging and persistent problem that *Esquire* exists. In its most recent issue, it has unbent so far as to publish a Debut of the literary world, with hints for aspirants and debutantes alike. In a gruelling year, which has seen transfers of authority or of ownership at the *New Yorker*, Alfred A. Knopf, Harper and Row and Doubleday, there was a felt need for guidance from the magazine which gave so many successful writers and critics their "start".

James Joyce Literary Supplement

Jeremy Lane

James Joyce Literary Supplement
No 1 May 1987

The English Department, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33124.
Annual subscription \$6.

Do we need, in addition to the *James Joyce Quarterly* and the *James Joyce Broadsheet*, another periodical devoted, largely if not exclusively, to Joyce? The *James Joyce Literary Supplement* naturally thinks so, claiming to be supplementary to the stricter critical concerns of the *Quarterly*, and, less explicitly, to Joyce studies generally. Hence its title, though "Review" might be more accurate, since its stated remit is to review books and events connected with the world of Joyce – not just the "Joyce Industry" but what the editor, Bernard Benstock, more genially calls the "Joycean Community".

Benstock doesn't mention the *Broadsheet*, which is really the *JJLS*'s British counterpart. By comparison the *Supplement* seems more American, more substantial and spacious, partly perhaps an illusion created by the format, twenty-four tabloid pages, giving generous accommodation to reviews and features. Editorial policy – "reviewers are asked to determine for themselves the length necessary to do justice to the book under review" – has a transatlantic expansiveness. There is a justifiable confidence that the rerrun of Joycean criticism will not soon abate. The industry after all is multinational, the Community cosmopolitan, and worldwide there will always be something Joycean happening. Joyce famously declared that in *Flannery O'Connor* he had written a book to keep the professors busy for centuries: the same awful prognostic presumably applies to periodicals.

The *Supplement* is welcome, none the less, reflecting a pleasantly cosmopolitan, relaxed academic, slightly cultic but not cliquish conviviality characteristic of the various Joycean symposia and colloquia. Indeed, as with the *Broadsheet*, the atmosphere of such gatherings is diffused through its pages. The end page gives the flavour: a memorial to the late Richard Ellmann, Joyce's supreme critic-biographer, an excerpt from "Anna Livia Plurabelle" in Polish, an invitation to the forthcoming International James Joyce Symposium in Venice, and a subscription form for the *JJLS* itself.

Twenty-three books on or around Joyce, some linking more tenuously than others, are reviewed. The more interesting reviews are elicited, not surprisingly, by the more challenging books – for example, Margo Norris on

It is twenty-four years since *Esquire* did this last (published a guide, I mean). Its July 1963 "Structure of the American Literary Establishment" was, in the words of its seasoned fiction editor Rust Hills, "Amazing. People stayed pissed about it for years." In those days, all the writers had a place with a given agent or publisher and were shown to be neatly in it: authors associated with teaching at a college or university were each assigned to a writing program; book editors worked at a certain publishing house and were shown tidily working there; theoreticians and critics were up there in The Ivory Tower, all listed by name; and the Beats were all there to the left (radical or otherwise) in the Cool World (purple on the chart); and all the out-of-it reviewers and writers, conferences were down there in Squaresville (green); and all those who were "in it" were shown in it, right there in the middle in the throbbing blob called The Red Hot Center.

This recollection suggests and demonstrates many things, including the well-known familiarity of Mr Rust Hills with the style and person of Papa. His new map takes the more loosely knit form of a solar system, with sets of interlocking planetary and lunar groups. This nicely avoids the snobbery of a family tree or the too-obvious commercialism of a "best seller" printout. Such a format also allows for the harmless use of the inevitable hackneyed terms such as "star" and "meteor". It also permits continuity in point of "The Red Hot Center".

Concerning this latest RHC. There is something a bit – well – *nebulous* about it. It contains

John Bishop's *Joyce's Book of the Dark*: "Finnegans Wake" or Hugh B. Staples on Paul van Caspel's *Bloomers on the Liffey: Esoteric readings of James Joyce's "Ulysses"*. But since the purpose is comprehensive coverage of Joyceana, there is a wide spectrum, from the slighter (Joyce and cooking, Joyce and the camera) to the more substantial (Joyce and creation, Joyce and sexuality): trivial and quadrivial, to echo himself. More mainstream material is also briskly covered. There are four main feature articles: an affectionately anecdotal tribute to the late Maria Jolas by Robert Adams Day, a somewhat strained account of an afternoon spent by the editor with Joyce's now middle-aged grandson Stephen, a progress report on the Zürich Joyce Foundation, and (from Patrick McGee) a sharply Neo-Marxian critique of the synoptic edition of *Ulysses*, now widely available in paperback.

One caveat. The editorial states loftily that reviewers are "requested to devote themselves to engaging in a dialogue with the text and avoid such pitfalls as reviewing typos and trivia", but printing errors aren't always trivial and the *Supplement* is well-stocked with them. This leads more than once to the irony of the reviewer castigating the textual sloppiness of a book in a review which itself is far from faultless. Most mistakes are merely irritating, but when Bishop's *Book of the Dark* becomes a *Book of the Dead* and Caspel's "esegesis" mutates into "exgesis" then real confusion can arise. Certainly a periodical which, while promoting a breezy and easy "Joycean Journalism", also seeks to assess scholarly and critical work in an academically responsible fashion, needs to clean up its own act a little.

Is the *Supplement* needed? In all conscience, probably not. The *Broadsheet* performs the same "in-house" service for Joyceans. The books will get reviewed anyway. But, there are worse ways of parting with six dollars a year.

Following the award of a \$6,000 grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (to be used to present poems for and by young people on the tube), the current (seventh) set of Poems on the Underground includes, together with Byron's "So we'll go no more a-roving" and Wole Soyinka's "To My First White Hair", Spike Milligan's spoof on British patriotism "English Teeth" as well as Liz Lochhead's "Riddle-me-ree" from her *Dreaming Frankenstein and Collected Poems*, 1984. A particular set of poems circulates on the London underground for three consecutive months and a further 3,000 poem-posters are sent to schools, libraries, hospitals and prisons. It is hoped that the eighth set (appearing in October) will include work by children. Further information can be obtained from Judith Chermak 01-485 1930.

Saul Bellow, but because his Nobel Prize was "one of the few universally applauded – let alone understood – in recent memory". Raymond Carver is present because he "led a host of young disciples to embrace the minimalist style and the short story form". Gordon Lish makes it for being "author, editor, teacher and publisher". Only Norman Mailer survives from the last RHC. Others are included for being good or potent literary agents.

More eccentricities catch the eye. Under the cumbersome heading, "Star Trekkers: Commercial Writers Whose Work is Taken Seriously by Literary People", we find James Michener. The novelist Joy Williams gets three entries – one for being published by Random House (elsewhere described dully as being "caught at the moment between Old Guard and New"), one for being seen at Key West (an alternative hangout to the Hamptons and the Vineyard) and one for having Amanda "Binky" Urban as her agent. This may be some kind of galactic pleasantry in that she is also the "significant other" of Mr Rust Hills, who charted these heavens in the first place.

Sour grapes, do you say? Not a touch of it. I have my spinoff to cherish. The aforesaid Gordon Lish, known informally as The Man Who Mistook His Career for Too Many Hats, is among the things the publisher and moving force of *The Quarterly*. *The Quarterly* is a Vintage-backed effort now in its second quarter. From this advantageous position it has recently printed a sulphurous attack on Ben Sonnenberg's *Grand Street*. In a piece by Robert Fogarty, himself editor of the *Antioch Review*, it is stated that *Grand Street* is "timid and formless" and that it has betrayed the role and function of a small review. "Its only aesthetic is an initiative one that chases after success by buying up stars." As well as delivering himself of this broad dab of generalization, Mr Fogarty gives his particular objection to New York's finest:

To have achieved a reputation on the basis of publishing Alice Munro, Ted Hughes, Penelope Gilliatt, Glenway Wescott and Northrop Frye in the premier issue, and then following it up with Alice Adams, Hans Magnus Enzensberger and Christopher Hitchens does not suggest an adventurous editorial view.

Oh, I don't know. All I know is that I've

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS ON

The TLS of August 22, 1912, carried a review by L. Fraser of W. Morgan Shuster's The Strangling of Persia, from which the following extracts are taken:

There can be no doubt that, from his own point of view, Mr. Shuster's excellent book constitutes a formidable indictment of Russian, and to a lesser degree of British, policy in Persia. It must be seriously regarded. It will assuredly become a powerful weapon in the hands of those who assail the Anglo-Russian Convention and the various developments which have followed the conclusion of that famous agreement.

The book is frankly a confession of failure. Mr. Shuster and his American assistants went to Persia in the hope of regenerating the finances of the country and placing the administration upon a stable footing. Mr. Shuster believes that he would have succeeded if he had been left alone. We do not share his confidence. The picture of the corruption of Persian public life, which he draws with remorseless candour, suffices to cast grave doubts upon his ability to achieve his purpose.

We think that, on his own showing, Mr. Shuster did not set about his task very tactfully. . . . He cared nothing for expediency. He was not content to adapt his policy to the situation as he found it, but tried the impossible feat of manipulating the situation into the direction which he thought it should follow. . . . Mr. Shuster never cared to make allowance for the larger workings of international relationships, never saw that the Persian question was only part of far wider issues. He never looked beyond the frontiers of Persia. We commend his loyalty, but not his pride.

danced with a girl who's danced with a chap who's danced with the Princess of Wales. I am called a "star" in a magazine published and directed by someone whose name is at the Red Hot Center. It doesn't do to knock these games of precedence and protocol. There's usually some merit in them if you know where to look for it.

Then again, one's conceit is always qualified by the sort of people who get let in these days. Does one want to be accounted stellar in a universe which grants even Trek-recognition to James Michener? He has just surpassed his own personal best by bringing out a new novel about the Frangate affair and the crisis in the American constitution. It is portentously titled *Legacy* (Random House, \$16.95) and many hardened experts concur in voting it the most rugged read yet.

It is also the shortest at just under 150 pages. It just seems a great deal lengthier. See how up to date Mr Michener is, and how easily he can bring a complex scene to life:

When we reached my parents' snug house and felt the warmth of both the place and the occupants, we relaxed, and since the Sunday papers had been full of the fact that I was to testify tomorrow, Mom and Dad had to be aware of my tension, but they were almost amusingly casual, careful to avoid any mention of Iran, the contras or the man they knew to be my associate, Oliver North.

As they moved about setting the table while I read the sports pages, I thought how truly American they were and how close they stood to the heart of our mainstream. My father was a certified military hero with a wooden leg to prove it, and my mother . . . that quiet, powerful lady was a civilian heroine laden with her own kind of honours.

The impression that all this is lifted from the *National Lampoon* is given an abrupt reinforcement a few pages later. This is the son still talking:

"Did his leg sort of off-steer you?" my sister once asked, and Mother gave a remarkably frank answer: "Some women in the faculty club asked that, and I told them: 'So far as I know, the left leg has nothing to do with love or the production of fertile sperm', and you adorable kids are the proof of that."

Michener's ear for common American speech is another of his gifts. Never mind his galaxy for the moment. He is, in his own way, numbered among the titans.

The prime error of Mr. Shuster's work in Persia was that he thought the East could be "hustled." He admits that such is his view. But the East does not take kindly to "hustling," as Mr. Shuster would have learned had he stayed eight years in Persia instead of eight months. For much of his failure he was not to blame, but he would have gone nearer success had he understood that his task required something more than great ability, intense moral earnestness, and impetuous energy. He never could bring himself to see that the woes of Persia were due to internal decadence far more than to external pressure.

If we were to build a ring fence round the country and man its Treasury with the ablest financiers America could produce, we doubt whether Persia could achieve salvation. Convictions of this sort need not lead us to ignore the essential exaltation of purpose which inspired Mr. Shuster during his stay in Teheran. While the bulk of Persian officialdom was permeated with greed and corruption, and foreign Powers were actuated by some at least of these motives he ascribes to them, he was thinking solely of the betterment of the Persian race. Whatever his defects may have been, he brought deep sympathy to his task. The judgments he passes upon the men he met are profoundly interesting, though sometimes wounding, and the account he gives of the intervention of Persian women in politics is extremely touching. Greatly though we differ from many of his contentions, a perusal of his book leaves the impression that he is a remarkable man, of whom America has some reason to be proud. If he failed in Persia, he left the country with his reputation enhanced, in spite of the errors we have ventured to indicate.

Letters

Badoglio and the Allies

Sir, – In demolishing with gusto an evidently worthless book on Badoglio Denis Mack Smith (August 7) has performed a useful service to history. May I be allowed, as one who was involved in the armistice negotiations, to supplement his account of the Marshal-Duke's least successful operation?

Mr Mack Smith is perfectly correct in saying that the design of the Italian campaign was "a holding operation to attract German forces into Italy and away from the main Normandy landing". The capture of Naples and Foggia was purely subsidiary; as Alexander signalled to Eisenhower in October 1943, he was prepared to lose both to a German counter-attack, since that would contribute even more significantly to the achievement of the object prescribed for him by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Eisenhower concurred. Neither was interested in gaining or holding specific territory.

Mack Smith is equally correct in denying the absurd story that the Allies undertook to give Badoglio two weeks' notice of the landing. They promised six hours' notice only; in the event this was extended to eighteen hours in consequence of General Taylor's mission to Rome. Nor did they ever promise an invasion in the strength of fifteen divisions. They hadn't got fifteen divisions available and their total amphibious "lift" could transport only three divisions.

It is rubbish to claim that the Allies had undertaken not to attack before September 12; no date – or place – was ever mentioned. The origin of that date has been obvious since 1945. Castellano, the Italian emissary who negotiated the armistice, wrote to Badoglio on September 4: "Though I have done my best I have been unable to discover anything about the place of the landing. On the date I can say *nothing precise*, but from confidential information I conjecture that the landing might take place between September 10 and 15, *perhaps* the 12th" (Castellano's italics). It was on the basis of this, presumably, that the King, instructed by Badoglio, told a crown council at the Quirinale on September 8: "The Anglo-Americans have decided to put forward the date of the Armistice by four days." Incompetent in misrepresentation as in everything else, Badoglio states in his memoirs that he signalled to Eisenhower asking him "to keep to the 12th, as first agreed". He should have realized that the text of his signal was likely to be published.

It was, in 1945, and there is nothing whatever about agreed dates; the excuse Badoglio gives for wishing to postpone the announcement of the armistice is that the situation had changed.

DAVID HUNT.
Old Place, East Wing, Lindfield, Sussex.

'Anti-Calvinists'

Sir, – Any reader of your journal who is not a specialist in seventeenth-century history could read Kevin Sharpe's review of Nicholas Tyacke's *Anti-Calvinists: The rise of English Arminianism, c. 1590–1640* (August 14) without the least suspicion that he was reading a review of one of the most important books to appear in the field this century. I hope, therefore, you will allow me some space to set the record straight.

Once upon a time, we believed in a two-party model of religious history in which Charles I was defending an "Anglican" tradition against a "Puritan" opposition. Thanks to Dr Tyacke, this "Anglican" tradition has now vanished beyond recall. Instead, we have a picture of a struggle between groups, each trying to prove it was more orthodox than the other, in which, up to the death of James I, the Calvinists enjoyed a very distinct advantage. When Charles abruptly took this away from them, he appeared to many of them to have moved the goalposts. This makes it possible to explain why much of the opposition to Charles in 1642 came from the heart of the Jacobean establishment, and even, in many cases, from inside his own Privy Council. It also makes it possible to explain why the Jacobean peace between the three Churches of Britain, in which a common Calvinism had been an essential ingredient, abruptly disappeared on the accession of Charles I, with disastrous consequences.

Sharpe's criticisms of this case, betray a

limited understanding of the case he is attacking. His remarks on James I and the case of Richard Montagu show a failure to understand the distinction between dominance, which James was always ready to allow to Calvinists, and monopoly, which he was not. The charge that "the Calvinist ceremonialists were passed over" will not survive the book's index entries for "Morton" and "Davenant". Sharpe does not understand that Charles's reiteration of the Thirty-Nine Articles, as much as Mr Gorbachev's reiteration of the doctrines of Lenin, enshrined an interpretation profoundly different from that of his predecessor. There is still plenty of room for debate here, but it must begin from a better understanding of Kevin Tyacke's case than is shown anywhere in this review.

CONRAD RUSSELL.
Department of History, University College London,
Gower Street, London WC1.

A Threat to Latin

Sir, – So Latin is to be excluded from the core curriculum of our schools. And what about the word "curriculum", or for that matter, the title of the sovereign, still to be read on every coin of the realm? Can our educators really wish to incur the responsibility of having cut loose our civilization from its moorings?

E. H. GOMBRICH.
19 Briardale Gardens, London NW3.

Hopkins's Verse

Sir, – Re Tom Paulin's Hopkins review (August 14): is not Hopkins's reason for putting in the umlaut – "What hours, O what black hours we have spent" – simply to make sure the line is read as an iambic pentameter? Metrically, there is no reason why the first "hours" should not also be two-syllabled: indeed, if it is so made, the extra syllable thrown into "O what black hours" augments the phrase's force.

ROY FULLER.
37 Langton Way, London SE3.

Sir, – Congratulations to Tom Paulin for his illuminating piece on Hopkins. I shall never again be able to look at the poetry without being struck by examples of "camp baroque" of the kind he perceives in stanza 28 of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. In the very next stanza we find the audacious "blown beacon" and "I kissed the rod" in "Carroll Comfort"; "sturdy Dick . . . prickproof, thick" in "Tom's Garland"; and "hoar hair, Ruck and wrinkle, drooping . . ." in "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo".

Just think: all these years I've been innocently believing Hopkins to be a sensitive and scholarly religious poet, never suspecting that he took, in Paulin's words, "a delight in a particular kind of yobbo populism and muscular brutality".

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 343
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than September 11. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on September 18.

1 "You are candid – very candid," said the clergyman slowly. For a minute or two he smoked in silence and with contracted brows. He was not accustomed to have things thrust upon him thus. It was unlike the speeches of laymen at church conferences and opinions expressed in the correspondence of the *Guardian*. The other watched him with an amused smile, much enjoying the situation.

2 "They were going to play golf once more in half an hour, and David staggered out on to the lawn to lie on the shady terrace-bank for a short spell of Swinburne, which Frank went to fetch from his bedroom. Letters had arrived during lunch, and he found one for himself and one for David, which with Swinburne and the daily paper that would contain one important matter, namely, the result of the county match between Sussex and Surrey, he took out with him.

"There's a letter for you," he said, "and there's Swinburne and the *Daily Telegraph*. What order of

merit?"
"Oh, *Telegraph* first," said David.

3 CHARLES: A good morning – a tremendously good morning – there isn't a cloud in the sky and everything looks newly washed.

RUTH (turning a page of *The Times*): Edith's keeping your breakfast hot – you'd better ring. CHARLES (Crosses to mantelpiece and rings bell up stage): Anything interesting in *The Times*? RUTH: Don't be silly, Charles.

Competition No 339
Winner: J. Coggrave

Answers:

1 "Lewis and Middleton Murry are, I'm sure, the only moderns likely to endure of the older crowd; for Eliot's later works are merely sanctionless quips and quirks; and Huxley is portentously obsessed with the problems that make City clerks depressed."

Edgell Rickword, "The Encounter"

2 I seem to note a roman profile bland,
I hear the drone from out the cactus-land:
That must be the poet of the Hollow Men:
The lips seem burning with a deep Amen.
Wyndham Lewis, "If So the Man You Are"

3 Joyces are firm and there there's nothing new.
Eliot has hardened just a point or two.
Hopkins are brisk, thanks to some recent boosts.
There's been some further weakening in Proust.
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Hopkins are brisk, thanks to some recent boosts.
There's been some further weakening in Proust.
W. H. Auden, "Letter to Lord Byron"

'The Advancement of Science'

Sir, – Brian Pippard's perfunctory remarks about my book *The Advancement of Science, and its Burdens* (July 17) do contain one factual statement. There is indeed a "ludicrous mistake about what the initials stand for in the celebrated EPR paradox". As it happened, this occurred in an essay previously printed, without mistake, in the *TLS*, and your readers might be amused (though no doubt more than I was) by my publisher's explanation how the error was made. According to an apologetic letter from Cambridge University Press, an over-anxious copy editor, at their New York City office, whose name shall be mercifully withheld here, noted in the final galley proof received from me the strange initials EPR; she thought it might be helpful to insert at the last moment what seemed to her a sensible interpretation. Thus Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen became electron paramagnetic resonance, as yet another example of the dangers of unauthorized good deeds.

GERALD HOLTON.
Department of Physics, Harvard University, Jefferson Physical Laboratory, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

'Contemporaries of Erasmus'

Sir, – I have some difficulty in following Peter van den Dungen's logic when he complains (Letters, July 17) that University of Toronto Press is offering a reduced price for the three-volume set of *Contemporaries of Erasmus* after having charged buyers a higher price for volumes bought individually. Surely it is general practice in publishing to offer multi-volume sets at a lower price, once they have been completed.

Purchasers of the first two volumes of *Contemporaries of Erasmus* after all had use of Volume One for a period of two years and Volume Two for a period of one year before the publication of Volume Three and the completion of the set. Taking Professor van den Dungen's complaint to its logical conclusion, anyone who has ever bought a book at its full price only to find it in remainder bins ten months later should have a reason to protest to the book's publisher. This is quite aside from the fact that a book published in an expensive casebound edition might be expected to appear in a paperback format within a year of its official publication, or that publishers of periodicals expect to realize a greater income from individual news-stand or bookshop sales than from prepaid subscriptions.

HARALD BOHNE.
University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Adam Ferguson (1723–1816), author of the *Essay on the History of Civil Society*: any information about letters from or to Ferguson; for an edition of his correspondence. Vincenzo Merolle. Dipartimento di Studi Storici, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, Università, P.le Aldo Moro, Rome, Italy.

Mary Kingsley: letters, photographs, materials relating to her; for a commissioned biography. Valerie Grosvenor Myer. 34 West End, Haddenham, Cambridgeshire CB6 3TE.

Harriet Martineau (1802–76): letters wanted, (other than those in the main university library collections: Trinity College, Cambridge, British Library, Birmingham, University College London, Bodleian, Dr Williams's Library; Wellesley, Yale); for a Selected Letters, to be published by Oxford University Press. Valerie Saunders. University of Buckingham, Buckingham MK18 1EG.

George Meredith: whereabouts of the unpublished manuscript by Meredith on "The Art and Science of Cookery", catalogued by Maggs in 1912–13, and quoted from by Boulestin; for an anthology of food in literature to be published by Oxford University Press, Caroline Hobhouse. 19 Campden Grove, London W8 4JG.

COMMENTARY

On the orders of the Order

Stephen Romer

EUGÈNE SUE
The Wandering Jew
 Adapted by Michelene Wandor
 Lyttelton Theatre

It has taken vision and foolhardiness to achieve this memorable staging of *The Wandering Jew*. On paper it must have looked a huge gumble and a director less sanguine than Mike Alfreds would have thought it unworkable. The novel itself, a sprawling French social romance, written in the 1840s, features more than fifty characters interwoven by chance and destiny into the fabric of the plot; these days the book has to be disinterred from a Rare Books Room. The middle-class Eugène Sue, almost hysterically anti-clerical, and politically a proto-socialist with feminist leanings, padded out his serialized novel (he was paid by the page) with frequent digressions about the living and working conditions of the lower classes, using statistics from other sources and often sounding like a philanthropic tract. Similarly, in full anticlerical cry, he adduces the testimony of others about the chilling efficiency and scope of Jesuit policing. But Sue's thinking was befuddled, its clear edges blurred by the demands of the genre in which, as here, the poor but noble-spirited hunchback sempstress is befriended and "elevated" by a sensuous and beautiful aristocrat who in turn falls in love with her cousin, an exotic Indian prince who is betrayed by his dastardly servant in the pay of the Jesuits who in turn poisons his employer. This is merely a representative thread of the melodrama.

Mike Alfreds, and Michelene Wandor who

has stripped the book to its bare narrative bone, compressing it into around four-and-a-half hours' playing time, were not, I imagine, enticed so much by its politics as by its plot, and the arresting vision of evil provided by the Jesuit Father Rodin, the reptilian manipulator with designs on the papacy, who is marvellously acted by Philip Voss. The plot, which suffers from the vagaries of serialization, has the advantage of one simple idea and a powerful time-structure to go with it; this contributes a lot to its staging by providing the suspense which does, if intermittently, engage the audience. It concerns, essentially, the efforts of the Jesuits to deprive the rightful inheritors of a vast fortune bequeathed them 150 years earlier by a persecuted Protestant. The fortune will be distributed equally among those of the family present in Paris in 1832, at a certain place and time designated on a bronze medal they all possess. One of the mysteries of the plot is not only that the rightful recipients are all in the dark as to how much they stand to gain, they are also for the most part indifferent to it. By coincidence, they all have hearts of gold, although their circumstances differ wildly. There are Maggie Wells's little hunchback sempstress, the splendidly cheery, bright-eyed worker-poet (finely played by Mark Rylance, who doubles as the Indian prince, Jalma), the Queen of the Revels and her drinking companion Jacques Rennepont, the twin daughters of a Napoleonic Marshal, and the proud and palpitating Andrée de Cardoville (sumptuously filled out by Sian Thomas). But they are babes in the wood compared to the Jesuits, who contrive to keep them away from the reading of the will, except for the last descendant, a disastrously sincere man of God called Gabriel, who by a chronic twist of fortune is himself a

Jesuit, and therefore bound by his vows to make everything over to the Order. As for the Wandering Jew of the title, and his footsore companion Herodias, they have only tenuous links with the story, and come ponderously on to the stage every now and then, to explain who they are, how they were condemned for rejecting Christ and John the Baptist to wander till Judgment Day, and somehow to represent the sufferings of all artisans and women. They also announce the coming of the cholera, that dread and indispensable disease which hurries the plot along by claiming victims, and providing good romance material, a *danse macabre*, a hospital scene and diggings in a graveyard by lanternlight.

To get this hulk afloat and beating along, enormous energy and versatility are required of the actors. Indeed, the action at the start is so convulsive it is not for some time that the smoke clears and you begin to understand who these people are. Seventeen actors play fifty parts, but the doubling up is smartly done. On one occasion the evil Princess's maid goes out, and comes straight back in, robed as the Cardinal Malpieri, with no confusion, despite its being the only drag act in the show. There are no props to speak of, except a gleaming golden globe in the Jesuit HQ, brooded over rapaciously by Rodin. There is no décor either; scene changes are effected by curtains that divide the stage into segments. Michelene Wandor's script holds tenaciously to the narrative threads, and the plot is hurried breathlessly along, as in the stage version of *Nicholas Nickleby*, by the actors themselves, who set the scenes, often laconically giving them their full melodramatic worth: "The rue de la Brise-

Miche, a squalid slimy narrow street . . .", "India: exotic carnivorous plants . . .", "The rue d'Anjou, elegance and colour; a door inlaid with ivory . . .", etc. The portmanteau strings of epithets are lifted straight from the original text. The show could have been richer visually, in terms of colour and lighting effects (a fine opportunity for ghoulish light and sound is lost in the cholera ward where the fresh-faced twins turn livid and drop dead). On the other hand, the stylized gesture of the time has been meticulously researched, and is a joy to watch. The twins supplicate in unison, stretch their hands towards their estranged father, bow their heads, cast their eyes to heaven, cling to each other with all the expansive mannerism of a "sensibilité" romantic painter like Greuze. Andrée de Cardoville gasps and swoons; the Indian prince walks like a panther, or abases himself in homage. They are backed up throughout by an eerie, inventive, score by Ilona Sekacz.

But the palm must go to Philip Voss, who makes the most of what is certainly the plum part, Father Rodin. In every way he binds the evening together. This self-styled "humble labourer toiling in the vineyard of the Lord" is ubiquitous. When he is on, he walks bent like an angleiron, peering up unctuously or menacingly, disturbingly lithe in his grubby soutane. He conjures a menagerie: tortoise, vulture, snake by turns. When he is off, he is still on stage, slumped deceptively over his desk, his shaved, jerky head horribly alert, watching his victims fall foul of his web. From time to time he flicks his tongue around his mouth and smacks his lips. He writhes and bellows awesomely in his death agony too.

Novel approaches

Philip Collins

Dickens Readings
 National Theatre

What, mused the *Staturday Review* in 1871, would become of the English stage "when the public has grown weary, if it ever does grow weary, of dramatic versions of the stories of the late Mr Dickens?" Never again will London theatregoers have the choice of a dozen productions of one story playing simultaneously, as happened in his lifetime, but many stage, television and radio versions still emerge. Marcel Marceau, a great admirer (his Bip is named after Pip) mimed Dickens's *Carol*; there have been operatic, musical and jazz (though not, I think, balletic) renderings. A few years ago, Shared Experience's four-part seven-performer *Bleak House* and the Royal Shakespeare Company's nine-hour *Nicholas Nickleby* blockbuster displayed alternative, and influential, ways of presenting fiction and of including the narrative voice besides dialogue and action. Lately the *Edwin Drood* musical flourished, at least on Broadway. The current National Theatre productions of *The Wandering Jew* and *Fathers and Sons*, and the RSC's *Les Misérables* and *Les Liaisons dangereuses* further exemplify theatre's debt to classic fiction and various modes of adaptation. Dickens can also be presented in one-man-show form: witness Bransby Williams's character-sketches earlier this century and Emylin Williams's impersonation of Dickens giving his public readings - though he chose not to use Dickens's own texts.

Four of these texts (*The Story of Little Dombey*, *Mr Bob Sawyer's Party*, *Doctor Marigold and Sikes and Nancy*) have recently been presented at the National Theatre by members of the Good Luck Theatre Company (Sarah Prince, Mick Reding, Philip Rees and Dikran Tulaine). Instead of devising some form of dramatization, they take it in turns to read substantial passages; dialogue included, and at least this way we can relish Dickens's sentences entire instead of their being chorically subdivided. But Good Luck's mode of rendition - like the *Speakers' Corner* *Speaker* read-in, or as if television news had sported four newscasters instead of two - is surely not the most imaginative or intelligent way of employing

four performers' talents. *Doctor Marigold* lends itself least well to this treatment, for it is a character monologue spoken by a Cockney market-trader. Its story is mawkish and contains, by Dickensian standards, few characters and little dialogue, so its success depends upon the cheapjack's character and flavourous idiom. To hear three actors and an actress attempting the impersonation, while not without its pleasures and illuminations, does not serve this piece well. Similarly the cameo-role of Toots in *Little Dombey*, enormously admired in Dickens's performance (his narrative description suggests both the problems and the opportunities: "a voice so deep, and a manner so sheepish, that if a lamb had roared it couldn't have been more surprising"), could better have been developed and perfected by one performer than suggested by two rather moderate attempts. The narrative is oddly distributed too. Thus, Sarah Prince might have brought life to the Nancy/Rose Maylie dialogue in *Sikes and Nancy*, but instead gets the Fagin/Bill Sikes one, for which she lacks the heavyweight resources.

Nor are Dickens's own reading-texts, chosen with an 1850s/60s audience in mind, always the best way to recommend him now. For us, they much over and under-represent various areas of his achievement. Also he took for granted what may not now always be the case, that his audiences knew why Mr Pickwick is attending. Improbably, a rowdy students' party, or what network of circumstances lies behind the murder of Nancy.

These criticisms made, it should be said that the narratives have enough momentum and verbal brilliance to carry the day. The Good Luck team bring manifest warmth and affection as well as skill to their performances, and though not fully aware of the ranges of irony in Dickens's narration, they show a good sense of his fun and wit and pathos. In *Sikes and Nancy* Nick Reding in particular was attuned to what Dickens called its "very passionate and dramatic" qualities, though the general effect fell short of what he adjoined himself to create in a splendidly forthright marginal stage-direction, "Terror To The End". This quartet will, I hope, find more flexible and adventurous ways of approaching their task.

Andrew Sanders reviews H. Philip Bolton's Dickens Dramatized on page 908.

The art of the big gesture

Jonathon Brown

The Vigorous Imagination: New Scottish Art
 Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, until
 October 25
 Moscow, A Private View: Contemporary Soviet
 Painting
 369 Gallery, Edinburgh, until August 29

To go by their representation in *Moscow, A Private View*, Soviet artists can easily be seen to be trying to escape the stereotypes of propaganda, most of all the stock human imagery of political propaganda which stifles self-expression and independence. Three artists in their early forties are at the centre of the show, each represented by five or six canvases, with one work each from five others, mostly a little younger. On the other hand, the selectors of *The Vigorous Imagination*, an exhibition prompted especially by the recent international success of young Scottish artists, seem to have been driven just as eagerly towards the stereotypes of self-expression and independence. Seventeen artists have been chosen, all born between 1947 and 1964, with an average age of thirty. Almost all the works in both shows are less than four years old.

An immediate clue is given by one of the selectors of the Scottish show, Clare Henry, art critic of the *Glasgow Herald*, in her essay in the catalogue. She writes of her first encounter with Steven Campbell, saying that he was "the personification of the dynamic artist: hyperactive, arms gesturing, talking sixteen to the dozen". Accordingly, the art presented here is the art of the big gesture, and its presentation is not without a blithesome quality either. As far as stereotypes go, the idea that art has to be big if it is to be major international contemporary art, has too overbearing a presence in this exhibition; one feels strongly the onslaught of special pleading. Professor Anthony Jones,

who was director of the Glasgow School of Art from 1980 to 1986, and who is now President of the Art School at the Art Institute of Chicago, writes happily of New York as "the most art-sensitive, acquisitive, and competitive marketplace in the world", but praises Steven Campbell only nine lines later for a lecture given to the school on a return visit from New York, a lecture "along the lines of 'how I made it in New York', a brilliantly funny, thoughtful, honest, and self-deprecating monologue (including his 'how to paint a picture that New York critics will like' lesson) to an audience that contained the next generation of Glasgow painters." It is a pity that a transcript of this is not reprinted here.

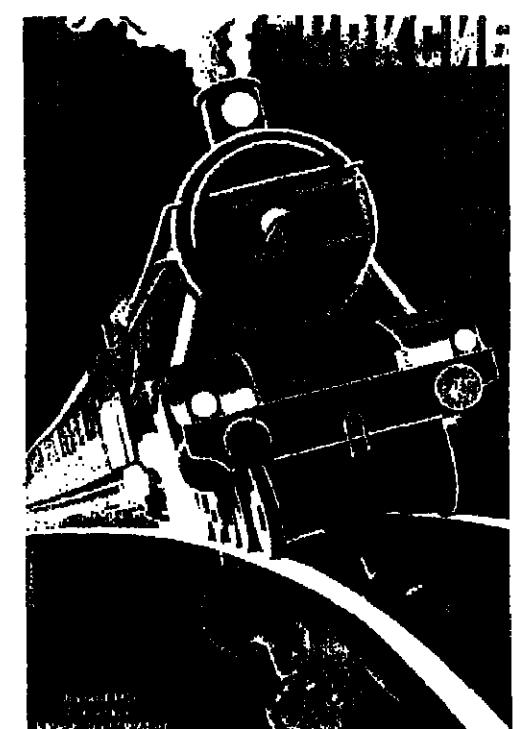
The greatest weakness of this exhibition is the inability of the selectors to debunk the values of acquisitive and competitive marketplaces, and at the same time to do justice to the exceptional qualities of some of these artists, and indeed to the state of pictorial art in Scotland. An attempt has been made to stage a blockbuster, and two things undermine that ambition. First, not all of the artists have that depth of quality; and second, blockbuster art does not provide a good representation of the breadth of painting and drawing in Scotland in recent years. How much better and more accurate a story would have been told by an exhibition along the lines of the Soviet show at the 369 Gallery, in which some artists are emphasized and others are given smaller space.

There is probably nothing very special in being able to turn out big examples of museum and gallery art. What makes Scottish art so strong is an ever-growing domestic marketplace, in which numerous quite small galleries thrive on an audience that is beginning to appreciate artistic liveliness. This is perhaps associated most widely with the slogan "Glasgow's Miles Better", a slogan which seems to have captured or created the mood of the entire nation. Instead of an unrelenting genuflec-

tion to the brash values of the New York art world, the selectors might have made a far more inspiring display if they had also included evidence of the humanly more worthy and worthwhile values of this now very active and receptive Scottish art world. Like the Impressionists, the Glasgow Boys of fifty or 100 years ago were collected in a rather domestic fashion in their native land, and the development and spread of that market have recently blossomed quite unexpectedly. This may have happened because of the rumours of excitement on the international stage, but in turn they have reinforced the confidence and quality of the art on a more modest scale. It is in that more modest world that Scottish art can consolidate any long-lasting contribution on the grander scale, and both should have been represented here.

The selectors are anxious to promote new Scottish art as a triumph for Glasgow, but fewer than half of the seventeen artists have been taught at the Glasgow School of Art, and only five of them in Anthony Jones's time; moreover, by far the most distinctively Scottish work has come from the six artists schooled at the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art at Dundee. June Redfern, who was taught at Edinburgh but who did lecture for a year at Glasgow, is better represented by a show at the Mercury Gallery, a more varied and singularly impressive achievement, all the more telling for its mixture of sizes. All seventeen young artists are sadly only seen here with work on the grand scale. In an exhibition at the Printmakers' Workshop, entitled *Festival Folio*, there are pictures by more than half of them, and in almost all cases the smaller work reveals a different skill and range.

The sense of discovery and beginnings which characterizes the work of the Scottish artists makes for what excitement is to be had from the Moscow artists too. It is a pity that the otherwise clear catalogue could not have been more frank as to the extent of what was and was



A poster for the film *Turkish*, 1929, by V. A. and G. A. Stenberg. It can be seen in Soviet Posters of the Silent Cinema, an exhibition of 127 posters dating from the period 1924 to 1931, at the Museum of Modern Art, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford, until October 18.

not previously allowed to be seen in Soviet Russia; and also the extent to which artists in the East came into contact with the new art of the West. The three main artists here are Anna Maksimovna Birshtein, Viktor Grigoryevich Kalinin, and Irina Aleksandrovna Starzhnetskaya; the outdoor painting of the last two being the most vivid in a way that is intensely and vigorously painted. They seem to belong comfortably to a painterly Dundee style.

some ways inept, can be a most moving work, even if Olegin himself remains a shadowy conception. In this production for the first time ever I was untouched by the Letter Scene and by Lensky's aria. Temirkanov's conducting pleaded extremely eloquently on everyone's behalf, the brief Prelude being hardly able to move under the stress of its own emotion. And the superb orchestra, making what we assume, surely rightly, to be authentic Russian sounds of ardour and passion, was a joy to listen to. But in the end it only pointed up the discrepancy between the utter conviction of what was going on below and the stilted conventionality of the jerking figures on the stage.

The Queen of Spades, alas, carried no more conviction. This fascinating and bizarre score - the orchestration is one of the work's most arresting features, certainly as performed here - may well be superior to *Eugene Olegin*, though initially it is less involving, containing nothing so stunning as *Olegin*'s two tremendous aria-scenes and dance-music. Again, the dramatic action is somewhat unclear, Herman's motivations, his passion for gambling and his passion for Lisa, relating to one another in ways that don't so much mirror the complexities of the human heart as the dramatist's uncertainty as to which Herman cares more about. But at least he should gamble, his music unmistakably tells us, like a figure from Dostoevsky. In this production he is more of a Gogolian grotesque, or a tenor wondering what he should be doing, besides singing. And again the surrealistic sets demanded flesh and blood figures; priorities were reversed, and performers apparently made of cardboard moved in front of what appeared to be genuine pieces of St Petersburg. It was one of those evenings when one incessantly strained to bridge credibility-gaps, and left exhausted and unmoved.

Boris Godunov presented a different sort of unsatisfactoriness. The settings were appropriately simpler and starker, the production more fluent, the mood of epic as opposed to Tchaikovsky's lyric drama at once established - and it was wonderful to be able to savour the

by, and thus of pervasive misunderstanding. So *Eugene Olegin* is ostensibly about the eponymous character and his relationship with Tatiana, who is clearly the person Tchaikovsky cares most about, and their involvements with three other figures, Lensky, Olga and Prince Gremin. But Tatiana's passionate outpouring in her great letter falls on deaf ears, and this is for Tchaikovsky a paradigm of human affairs. Lensky comes to grief because he fails to realize that his closest friend Olegin is merely working off his boredom by flirting with Olga, who is brutally dispatched from the plot when Tchaikovsky has no further use for her. Only Gremin is happy, because he is too insensitive to see that he is not the object of Tatiana's love, and is delighted to have someone he can love sentimentally without looking too deeply into the matter.

In this strange, inadvertently original drama of mutual incomprehension, it is essential that every opportunity the text gives for the characters to confront one another should be taken to the full, in order to show how completely their attempts to make contact fail; life imposes solipsism on people desperate to "relate". Unfortunately, Temirkanov's production gives them no chance to make the effort, even. For no one looks at anyone else; they all sing straight to the audience and then run off the stage. None of the singers, at least in the cast I saw, is at all gifted as an actor, with the exception of Nikolai Okhottnikov's Gremin, and any acting from him is supererogatory. Instead of getting the singers to live their roles, Temirkanov seems to be content to leave them to adopt whatever postures they find easiest for singing in. The low level of dramatic performance is stressed by the extreme naturalism of the settings. Substantial segments of Russia appear to have been placed on the stage - and they are, it must be said, removed and replaced with extraordinary expedition and silence, so that the breaks between scenes are welcome brief. But such a touching thoroughness of setting, which presumes no imaginative powers on the part of the audience, demands a corresponding style of acting. *Eugene Olegin*, although in

The Kirov Opera from Leningrad is in England for a month on a gruelling schedule, performing the three most popular Russian operas in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Their Artistic Director and Chief Conductor, Yuri Temirkanov, is leading nearly all the performances and is the producer of the two Tchaikovsky works, *The Queen of Spades* and *Eugene Olegin*. *Boris Godunov*, in Musorgsky's second version, but incorporating the St Basil scene, is produced by Boris Pokrovsky. All three operas are of course based on Pushkin: *The Queen of Spades* on a novella, *Eugene Olegin* on a poetic narrative, and *Boris Godunov* on a verse drama.

None of the works is unproblematic. They are all, not to put too fine a point on it, amateur in dramatic construction, and can easily amount to less than the sum of their parts. Tchaikovsky, whose dramatic instinct in his last three symphonies is virtually unerring, accepted or failed to create texts in which the high-points of the action tend to be dispersed rather haphazardly, and in particular fails to elicit many scenes, or protracts them after their point has been made. No doubt this is related to his inability to create sufficient numbers of characters with whom he can identify. In his great symphonies there is the sense of one character confronting Fate, and this gives them their tragic power. The two Pushkin operas attempt to portray characters confronting one another, but really they are up against something different from, and bigger than, another character so that there is a strong feeling of the leading figures passing one another

ravenous of Musorgsky's own scoring. But though the orchestra was once more marvellous, Temirkanov's own temperament seemed to be less in tune with Musorgsky's objectivity. Faced with a score which he couldn't nudge and fuss over as he had Tchaikovsky's, he conducted a faceless performance, the first hour and a quarter of which was taken at a more or less uniform andante, which levelled out the drama so that even the Coronation Scene was not stirring; and the scene in the inn, which possesses tremendous rhythmic vitality, sorely needed after the ordeal in Pimen's cell, merely jogged along. Part of the difficulty with the work itself is that however often we are told that it is about the Russian people in the first place, Boris himself remains so much the most vividly realized figure (certainly for anyone who saw Boris Christoff or has heard Chaliapin) that if he is played down to the extent that he is in this production the work seems to be no more than a somewhat arbitrary succession of discrete scenes. The Boris I saw, Mikhail Kit, combined dignity of bearing with a mild-toned, unincisive singing style, as if he were insisting that he was in no way the star of the show. Fitting in with this conception, the opera ended, as Musorgsky intended, with the Krony Forest scene, which for the most part is so musically undistinguished that it is bound to be an anti-climax, even after so low-keyed a death as Kit enacted. With most of the other performers also not rising to any striking degree of individuality, the final impression was of mere anonymity - one Russian is very like another; and that can't have been Musorgsky's aim.

So all told the season has been a disappointment. After seeing and hearing about two-thirds of the ensemble, I find it mediocre, with several superannuated voices, and Sergei Leiferkus alone, a brilliant Tomsy in *The Queen of Spades* and a less forceful Olegin, holding out the possibility of greatness. Ensemble opera is certainly the ideal, but the Kirov Company seems to go in more for a highest common factor than a lowest common denominator.

Contemporary manners

Graham Reynolds

BRIAN ALLEN
Francis Hayman
196pp. Yale University Press. £20.
0 300 09151 8

The position of the artist in Britain changed radically during the eighteenth century. At the beginning of that age he was virtually dependent upon the private patronage of a small group, and his works were rarely seen outside their homes. As the century progressed there were more opportunities for public display, rising interest led to yearly exhibitions, and the movement culminated in the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768. Francis Hayman became President of the Society of Artists which played a large role in furthering these changes, and in 1760 staged the first public exhibition of contemporary British artists. Yet, astonishingly, Brian Allen's monograph is the first full-length study of his career. It amply redresses the injustice done to Hayman by the prevalent treatment of him as a footnote in the lives of Hogarth, Gainsborough and Reynolds.

Exploring all the aspects of Hayman's output, Dr Allen shows how he enriched the art of

his time in portraiture, history painting, decorative painting and book illustration. Almost the only genre he did not attempt was pure landscape. It is not the least of his services that while instructing the young Gainsborough in the rudiments of the conversation piece he employed him to paint the landscape background in his portrait of Elizabeth and Charles Bedford with a St Bernard dog, and in other portrait groups. In the impressive corpus of over seventy portraits assigned to Hayman there is a preponderance of professional people, such as the medical men William Ellis and Charles Chauncey, the playwrights John and Benjamin Hoadly and the entrepreneur Jonathan Tyers, the patron who commissioned Hayman's most inventive pieces, the decorations at Vauxhall Gardens.

Hayman first came before the public as a scene painter at Goodman's Fields and Drury Lane. This profession, which involved not only the design but the painting and repair of scenery, was an advantageous introduction to the less ephemeral aspects of an artist's life, providing him with an experience of facial expression, gesture, movement and *mise-en-scène*, and widening the range of his literary interests. The fifty-odd large canvases he painted for Vauxhall Gardens included scenes from cur-

rent plays, such as Coffey's *The Devil to Pay* and Fielding's *The Mock Doctor*. Even in their present battered condition the Vauxhall decorations for *The Milkmaid's Garland* and *The Play of See-Saw* show his understanding of elegant dancing rhythms. In such compositions his stage experience was reinforced by the influence of Gravelot, who is credited with infusing a French style into mid-eighteenth-century English rococo.

Hayman's skill in rendering the nuances of contemporary manners is demonstrated by the illustrations to Richardson's *Pamela*, in which he again collaborated with Gravelot. These were commissioned after a plan to employ Hogarth on two frontispieces had fallen through. Since Richardson wrote that the engraving after one of those designs had "fallen very short of the Spirit of the Passages they were intended to represent" it may be that Hogarth had approached the novel in too ironic a mood. There is no trace of satire in Hayman's urbane rendering of life in a noble household, any more than in his portrait group of Richardson and his family, which exudes an atmosphere of resolutely complacent prosperity.

The sources for Hayman's biography are scanty, and he is mainly recorded in anecdotes.

These show him to have been a jovial man, cast in the mould of Falstaff, whose adventures he liked to paint. The early exhibiting societies sprang from the convivial meetings of artists at Old Slaughter's Coffee House, from which Hayman emerged as the natural leader after Hogarth had expressed his total opposition to the idea of an academy of artists. But the incessant quarrels, particularly over the perennial problem of hanging exhibitions, exhausted even his geniality, and he had resigned his offices before the establishment of the Royal Academy. By this time, as Allen points out, he had become old fashioned. His Gallic salt was giving way to the neo-classicism introduced by artists who had studied in Italy, such as Hamilton, West and Dance.

Reversing the current custom by which the catalogue becomes the only available book on the artist, Brian Allen's work is a monograph on Hayman which also served as the catalogue of the exhibition at Kenwood (reviewed in the *TLS*, July 10). Owing to the thoroughness with which he has presented his material it fulfils these functions admirably. By re-creating the achievement of one of its leading exponents it recaptures the exhilaration of a period in British art in which the dominant characteristics were elegance, grace and lightness of touch.

Half-forgotten figures

Marc Jordan

FRANÇOIS SOUCHAL
French Sculptors of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The reign of Louis XIV: Illustrated catalogue
Volume Three: M-Z
Translated by George and Elsie Hill
464pp. Oxford: Cassirer, distributed by Faber. £75.
0851810535

Although a fourth volume of addenda and corrigenda is promised for the near future, this book effectively brings to a conclusion François Souchal's magisterial *catalogue raisonné* of French sculptors working in the reign of Louis XIV. The two earlier volumes (A-F, 1977, and G-L, 1981) have already become indispensable tools for anyone working on the history of art in seventeenth-century France, an area the variety and aesthetic quality of whose sculpture have long been underestimated. The sculptors, moreover, have been frequently dismissed as virtuoso executants whose artistic identities were submerged in those of the impenetrable of the King's Works, the painter Charles Le Brun and the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart. Now, with minutely researched data available on the work of 106 sculptors who spent all or part of their careers in the employment of the King, in the main on the embellishment of the gardens and châteaux at Versailles and Marly but also working for the Paris churches and private clients, it should be possible to make a proper assessment of their neglected achievement.

Professor Souchal's catalogue is both less and more than the work which has served as its base and which it largely supersedes. Stanislas Lami's *Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'école française sous le règne de Louis XIV*, published in 1906. It is less in the sense that in the interests of coherence Souchal has excluded sculptors who worked entirely in the provinces. He has also left out a large number of ornamental masons and marble merchants who appear in Lami's dictionary because they are mentioned as "sculptors" in old documents. But *French Sculptors* is much more than an illustrated revision of Lami's work because Souchal and his collaborators, Françoise de La Moureyre and Henriette Dumuis, have gone back to the documentary sources. In particular they have combed with exemplary patience and intelligence the Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi and the Parisian notaries' records to correct or confirm old information and to produce much that is entirely new in an area where multiple authorship of commissions and the long time span of execution can be very confusing.

As far as possible Souchal has tried to illustrate each work catalogued either with a photo-

graph for extant works or with an old drawing or engraving for those lost or substantially altered. The latter illustrations, again the result of patient searching, are in many ways the most valuable part of the enterprise, particularly where they show the original context of decorative or monumental sculptures: throughout Louis XIV's lifetime the architectural and decorative elements at Versailles, for instance, were in a state of flux, many works were later moved or altered to suit the less grandiose taste of the eighteenth century and the Revolution took its toll particularly of religious statuary and church monuments.

Each volume of *French Sculptors* has its outstanding figures. Volume One was dominated by the Lyonnais Antoine Coysevox (1640-1720), whose flamboyant work set the prevalent tone for decorative sculpture at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and who was also one of the most brilliant of French portraitists. Volume Two had François Girardon (1628-1715), the close collaborator of Le Brun and for many years the doyen of the team of sculptors at Versailles. Usually thought of as the most classicizing of the sculptors of the period, he emerges from Souchal's catalogue as an artist of protean variety. Volume Three has the rebarbative Marseillais Pierre Puget (1620-94). It is an indication of

the value of Souchal's work that without in any way diminishing the artistic stature of this "independent", his career is brought into comprehensible relation with those of his more conventional contemporaries.

Both Puget and the brothers Gaspard and Balthazar Marsy (1624-81 and 1628-74), authors of some of the most fiery sculpture in the gardens of Versailles, have recently been the subjects of excellent monographs by Klaus Herding and Thomas Hedin respectively. This is reflected in the relative brevity of Souchal's catalogue entries; he wisely prefers to give most space to artists such as the admirable Jean-Baptiste Tuby (1635-1700), who has found no biographer since the eighteenth century, printing in addition to biographical notes, bibliography and catalogue of works an inventory of sculptures found in his studio at his death and a table showing a complex web of relationships by marriage with other prominent families of artists and craftsmen in baroque France. Indeed it is for the rehabilitation of a host of almost forgotten figures such as Tuby or Jacques Huzau (1624-91) or Cornille Van Cleve (1646-1732) that we must be grateful to Souchal. The picture that emerges from *French Sculptors* is not just one of a uniformly high level of executive competence but also one of considerable inventive skill. The intervention

of Charles Le Brun as a provider of designs for sculptors employed on the King's Works made for a general stylistic harmony. It also ensured that symbolism would be consistent and legible. It meant that the standard of work of men of lesser talent was raised but it also seems as if those of greater talent were by no means confined by Le Brun's *données*. It is remarkable that in the many cases where Souchal juxtaposes a drawing by Le Brun with a photograph of the finished statue derived from it what is most apparent is the very limited plastic quality of Le Brun's imagination. To go from such a design to the conception of an over-life-size statue in the round must have required plenty of invention as well as technical skill.

The introduction to Volume One of *French Sculptors* promised that the three volumes devoted to the reign of Louis XIV were to be the first part of a monumental survey of French sculpture from the Middle Ages to the end of the nineteenth century. Professor Souchal has already made important contributions to the study of the sculpture of the Louis XV period with books on Guillaume and Nicolas Coustou and the Slodtz family. Let us hope that with the continued support of the Wildenstein Foundation, which has made *French Sculptors* possible, the next phase of this invaluable project is already in hand.

Historical sketches

Edward J. Sullivan

ANTHONY HULL
Goya: Man among kings
242pp. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press. £14.95.
08191 52412

Francisco de Goya is fascinating not only for the inherent value of his prodigious *oeuvre* but also for the dramatic potential of both his personal and professional life. Stories (mostly unsubstantiated) of the artist's youthful career as a bullfighter, his amorous involvement with a nun in Italy, and, especially, his affair with the Duchess of Alba have sparked the imaginations of writers, yielding a great many works of fiction and semi-fiction, such as Marion Chapman's *The Loves of Goya* (1937) and Eric Porter's *Saturn's Child* (1947). Film versions of episodes from the painter's life have included Henry Koster's 1958 *The Naked Male* and last year the Washington National Opera presented Gian Carlo Menotti's *Goya*. Goya's work served as the basis for essays on politics, philosophy and morality. The Czech playwright and novelist Karel Capek described him as a revolutionary hero in his 1931 *Letters from Spain*; and in traditional art-historical writing there is an enormous Goya literature, including critical catalogues by X. Desarmet-Pit-

gerald (1928-50) and Pierre Gassier and Juliet Wilson (1971). Nevertheless many problems of attribution and provenance as well as other questions remain unclarified. And although, especially since the 1960s, some extremely interesting studies on specific aspects of Goya's art have been produced there is as yet no traditional biography which successfully integrates information and analysis of the art with the life and times. Anthony Hull attempts to remedy this lack in *Goya: Man among kings*, announced as a biography which "blends conjecture with fact".

Professor Hull presents a reliable account of the artist's youth and early years at court, including his friendships with painters such as Mengs, the Bayeu family and other contemporaries. He does not expand our knowledge of what he terms Goya's "missing years", including his lengthy stay in Italy in 1768-9; instead, he fleshes out this episode and his book in general with straightforward narration of larger historical events. Much of Hull's understanding of Goya's personality has been gleaned from his sensitive reading of the artist's letters to his boyhood friend Martín Zapater (published in 1982 in an edition by Mercedes Agudá and Xavier de Salas) - letters often difficult to decipher, for Goya was bad at spelling and constantly inserted private jokes and other coded references. However,

he is most at ease with the historical facts of the period, giving, for example, a succinct account of the Squelace riots and the rise to power of Manuel Godoy.

The book's major faults lie with the art-historical material. Hull refers to a great number of paintings and prints by Goya, many of them simply enumerated, yet there are only thirteen (poor quality) black-and-white illustrations. In a biography of this sort, one does not expect to find critical discussions of the fine points of art history, but mention of certain theories presented in the relatively recent literature on Goya might have enhanced this book. Among these are Priscilla Muller's examination of the possibility that Goya's illness was caused by lead poisoning and Fred Licht's "mirror theory" to explain both the portrait of the Count of Floridablanca and the "Family of Charles IV". *Goya: Man among kings* would have been more satisfying had the painter's art been brought into clearer international focus. A discussion of his sources in English portraiture and satirical prints and references to his early Neoclassicism and his later affinities with Romantic artists in France, Britain and elsewhere, would have added interest.

For the general reader, though, the biography can be recommended as a serious but introduction to the complex personalities of both Goya and his epoch.

All high spirits

Theodore Ziolkowski

S. S. PRAWER
Frankenstein's Island: England and the English in the writings of Heinrich Heine
357pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.
0 521 32381 9
HEINRICH HEINE
Deutschland: A Winter's Tale
Translated by T. J. Reed
111pp. Angel. £8.95 (paperback, £4.95).
0 946162 12 2

For over a century Heinrich Heine has enjoyed a generally favourable press in England. Carlyle's partiality towards the early Romantics, to be sure, turned him against the "black-guard" whose poetry reminded him of a "filthy, foetid sausage of spoiled victuals". But even before Heine's death in 1856, George Eliot published in the *Westminster Review* an appreciation in which she ranked his lyric genius second only to Goethe's. Two years later the first major translation of his poetry, by E. A. Bowring, appeared. With Matthew Arnold's essay of 1863, which hailed him as "the most important German successor and continuator of Goethe", Heine assumed his place beside Voltaire and Byron among the "brethren of the genus irritabile".

Arnold was not put off by the fact that Heine so often turned his "sardonic smile" on England.

I did with thee not, that thy sharp
Upbraidings often assailed
England, my country . . .

Arnold was engaged in the same "life and death battle with Philistinism" that had marked Heine's attitude towards England. Yet Heine also observed that he might happily have settled in England "if it were not that I should find there two things, coal-smoke and Englishmen; I cannot abide either". It is this curious ambivalence that S. S. Praver undertakes to analyse in *Frankenstein's Island*.

With the wisdom of hindsight one may claim that the great political purpose of Heine's later years - what Praver calls his "cold war" effort to ally France with Germany in a common front against England - was anticipated in the circumstances of his early life. Heine was born in Düsseldorf, which shortly after his birth in 1797 became the Grand Duchy of Berg, one of three French states that Napoleon established on German soil. From childhood Heine was as Francophile as well as an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon. At the same time, his family was so closely tied through business to merchants in England that Heine, as a boy, was called Harry. While the schools were oriented towards French culture, "Harry" was attracted by English literature and studied the language in the business academy that he entered in 1813. From the start, then, he sensed a tension between the two cultures and, within England, between the practical world of business and the writers he admired.

By 1819, when Heine heard at Bonn the lectures of A. W. Schlegel, whose translations had shaped Germany's image of Shakespeare, Heine had already published translations of Byron. During the next few years he wrote *William Ratcliff*, a tragedy set in northern Scot-

land; began his fragmentary novel *The Rabbi of Bacherach* in explicit imitation of Sir Walter Scott; and composed several travel books in the manner of Laurence Sterne. As a writer Heine had been profoundly marked by English literature when in 1827 he arrived in England for a visit of four months.

If, despite the caricatures of English tourists that constituted a set-piece in his travel writings, his ambivalence had remained fairly balanced, the stay in England soon tipped the scales. The accounts that he subsequently published under the title *English Fragments* touched a variety of topics: his impressions of London, the character of John Bull, justice at the Old Bailey, politics at Westminster, and Bedlam as a model of English society. But it was an England seen wholly from the outside. Troubled by illness, plagued by money worries, incapable of carrying on a fluent conversation in English, Heine had no access to social life in London and no contact at all with literary circles. Limited to the company of émigrés and museum guides, he met no Englishmen who might have exemplified for him the virtues of English pragmatism or explained the workings of parliamentarianism.

By the time Heine arrived in Paris in 1831, England had been reduced to a foil against which he set off the more congenial virtues of France. Even so, Shakespeare remained the touchstone by which he measured literary merit. In 1838 he published *Shakespeare's Girls and Women*, which provides more insight into Heine than Shakespeare. And his writings and conversations teemed with quotations from his favourite plays. Moreover, his dislike of contemporary England did not affect his love of Old England. In 1831 a series of articles on French painters evoked comments on Delacroix's scenes from English history; and three of the finest poems in the volume *Romanzero* (1851) portray episodes from English history.

More often, however, England is played off unfavourably against France. Classical gardens, which display the restraint of Racine's tragedies, are more satisfying than "English" gardens, which reflect the disorder of Romantic drama; parliamentary liberty is revealed to be inferior to the liberties achieved through the revolutions of 1789 and 1830. Even the English bulldog comes out badly: it cannot match the elegance of French greyhounds. Certain leit-motifs crop up repeatedly: the indignities of English cuisine, which knows only two kinds of sauce (½ butter and ½ flour; or ¾ butter and ½ flour); or the boorishness of English tourists, who are either "fat, healthy, beefsteak-fed" or "long, thin, bony".

Heine knew that he was being unfair. "My God, I don't know what it was I had against the English", he told Lucie Duff-Gordon in 1855, "what it was that made me so malicious towards them. But it was all high spirits: I never really hated them, and I never really got to know them either." It is Praver's persuasive argument that Heine's attacks against England are not "virulent malice" but "deliberate caricature". His art, a product of the age that produced Daudet, "demands exaggeration and expressive distortion from its practitioners, and a sense of humour from its recipients". His pen exposed the characteristic of modern soci-

ety as a whole: industrialization, commercialism, capitalism, bourgeois philistinism.

While Praver is surely right, his book - the *obiter scriptum* of a scholar who has given us other major studies of Heine - is rather heavy going. The movement is often repetitious because the development is chronological, not thematic. The work-by-work account of virtually every reference to England in Heine's *oeuvre* is sometimes tedious. Praver is so shrewd a critic that his running commentary is generally interesting. But because the focus is so narrow, the larger context of life and works is often invisible. As a result, readers unable to provide their own background of history and biography might well come away from this book with an idiosyncratic view of Heine.

Since Praver is the doyen of Heine scholars

in England, it is fitting that his Oxford colleague, T. J. Reed, has dedicated to him as a retirement gift his sparkling new translation of Heine's *Deutschland*, which bears the Shakespearean subtitle *A Winter's Tale*. The brief passage from this mock epic that Praver discusses concerns King Ernst Augustus. Reed's version brings out quite clearly the Heineque ambivalence towards England that Praver so masterfully expounds:

Whenever I see him, he complains
how fearful Boris' job is,
being a king in Hanover
where this wretched German mob is.

He's used to the British way of life,
he finds ours narrow beside it,
he suffers from spleen, and rather fears
he may hang himself now he's tried it.

In a darkening glass

Isobel Armstrong

W. DAVID SHAW
The Lucid Vell: Poetic truth in the Victorian age
311pp. Athlone. £25.
0 485 11293 0

W. David Shaw's *The Lucid Vell* is one of the few books on Victorian thought prepared to engage with its audacity and complexity. It banishes the aura of the period piece and the assumption that the Victorians can be seen in terms of a homogeneous ethical stodginess, moving naively in their simple God-bound universe or experiencing their simple doubts. Professor Shaw recovers the variousness and subtlety of Victorian explorations of art, knowledge and language and their uncomfortable relation with ourselves.

The book's subtitle, "Poetic truth in the Victorian age", is somewhat misleading. It is less a study of Victorian dealings with absolute truth than a cultural history which documents a crisis of representation. How can reality be represented when the teleological grounds on which our assumptions about the real are based are being eroded by the very inquiries into knowledge and language undertaken for the sake of clarifying the nature of representation? The phrase "crisis of representation" is Foucault's but it is appropriate to the varieties of scepticism that Shaw explores.

This revelation of Victorian complexity is achieved by a few comparatively simple moves which nevertheless substantially alter the categories with which we think of Victorian culture. First, as the Victorians themselves did, Shaw assumes their complete familiarity with the philosophy of Kant and Hegel; part of his project is to explore the ingenious developments of British idealist poetics. Second, Shaw sees that it is actually theology which motivates most innovative Victorian philosophy and that theology subsumes aesthetics, psychology, linguistics, historiography and even science until quite late in the century. Last this should make the age fade back into sepiæ, it has to be remembered that nineteenth-century theology initiates crucial debates on cognitive problems, representation and language which are still with us today in modernist and post-modern theory.

The Victorians ceaselessly generated models for thinking about the form in which the mind represents objects in the world. Shaw orders these around Tennyson's ambiguous metaphor of "the lucid vell" from *In Memoriam*. He charts a drama which moves from empirical models of the mind as mirror of the world to late Victorian formalism, which abandons the correspondence. The *lucid vell*, in which the poet exploits the veil of representation to intuit an existing world, is displaced by the *lucid vell*, in which an agnostic semiotics constructs a fiction of the world from language rather than seeing through it to an existing reality. The earlier models are superseded by the self-referential kaleidoscopic mirror and the darkening glass of nominalism. Concurrently, Shaw shows how profoundly the poets respond to a changing epistemology, so the book is also an original re-reading of Victorian poetry.

The extraordinary intellectual intensity brought into play by the crisis of representation

and the deconstruction of Platonic metaphysics is well understood. Those who assume Matthew Arnold to be the dominant critic of this period will find he is one among many figures, some of whom come as a surprise. Shaw begins with J. S. Mill's consideration of the antagonism of poetry and science, and his first chapter moves to the scientists John Tyndall and T. H. Huxley, and then to the philosophy of F. H. Bradley, to demonstrate how models of representation make language, which Huxley thought of as provisional symbolic shorthand not to be confused with "real entities", antecedent to an understanding of the world. In subsequent chapters the expected writers are there, Carlyle, Keble, Browning (arrestingly aligned with Schleiermacher), Arnold, Hopkins, E. S. Dallas, Ruskin, Pater. But other important figures are associated with poetics - W. J. Fox, Arthur Hallam, Sidney Dobell, J. F. Ferrier, H. L. Mansel, Benjamin Jowett, F. H. Bradley.

It is the idealists who emerge as the adventurous figures. Shaw establishes the critical significance of J. F. Ferrier's work and its relevance to Tennyson. Ferrier, for whom the world was the "thing, or thought, *mecum*", conceptualized the shifting perspectives of a universe indivisibly framed by self-consciousness. H. L. Mansel posited a contradictory and unknowable God and prepared the way for an autotelic world by exploring an account of symbolism in which words are detached from their referents. When the axiom of an absent or indeterminate subject comes together with the gap or empty space where meaning should be, it is possible for F. H. Bradley in *Appearance and Reality* (1893) to arrive at the notion of "an unreal network of differential relations, with nothing at the centre". Shaw recognizes that an indigenous British deconstruction arises from Victorian theology, anticipating Derrida. He might even have adduced Newman's Tract XC as one of the outstanding nineteenth-century essays on "presence".

A number of questions can be asked of this major book. If Victorian thought has affinities with post-modern theory, why hasn't this been recognized before, and what is different about it? How Derridean is it? Part of the answer might be found in Shaw's remark that the Victorians refused to make inferences from theories of language to theories of knowledge. They ended with a theory of language, which is where Derrida begins, but they began with meaning and God. However agnostic, their thought casts teleological shadows and is the more daring for this. There could be no crisis of representation otherwise.

Another question concerns the politics of Victorian poetics. Professor Shaw is well aware that no theory is ideologically innocent, but the ideology of aesthetics does not play a strong part in the book. He is short with Benthamic poetics, but why, after all, were radical Benthamic poets as passionate as Tory Coleridgians? Issues of gender, which were intertwined with aesthetics in an age when so many women wrote poetry, are not considered either.

Such questions do not detract from the importance of this complex book. It bears the mark of revision and self-critical thought, but its difficulty matches the nature of its theme. It initiates a new approach to the nineteenth century. To read *The Lucid Vell* is to see the sepiæ veil withdrawn from Victorian thought.

A material fascination

Lachlan Mackinnon

EAVAN BOLAND
The Journey and other poems
60pp. Manchester: Carcanet/Dublin: Arlen
House, Women's Press. £4.95.
085035 6832

There are two kinds of poem in Eavan Boland's *The Journey and other poems*. The first deals directly with the poet's own experience as a woman, as a mother, and as an Irish girl brought up in England. In the opening poem, "I Remember", she recalls her mother painting a portrait in the drawing-room, and coming down herself that morning to find, as

a nine-year-old in high, fawn socks – the room had been shocked into a glacier of cotton sheets thrown over the almond and vanilla silk of the French Empire chairs.

One sentence blocked into six quatrains, the poem comes to rest on those familiar "chairs" as though to anchor an unspoken desperation. Secretly it is the child who is "shocked", but the frequently violent enjambment lets that emotional pressure pervade the entire poem, barely reining it in. As an adult, Eavan Boland is saddened by the loss of such transformations:

The last clerk shows up the headlights
of the cars coming down the Dublin mountains.

Our children used to think they were stars.

The adult knows better, as "Suburban Woman: A detail" shows, but is still afraid to walk to a neighbour's house at dusk, fearing that

something
which may be nothing
more than darkness has begun
softening the definitions
of my body.

An object in nature, she is subject to dissolution, leaving only her fear to remain "crying 'remember us'".

Boland is fascinated by materials: "almond / and vanilla silk", lace, *crêpe de Chine*, denim, muslin, worsted are just a few random examples; and her emphasis on women's work reminds us of a younger poet, Medbh McGuckian, although she is much less unyieldingly hermetic. The first stanza of "The Bottle Garden" has that timbre, for instance:

I decanted them – feather mosses, fan-shaped plants,
asymmetric greys in the begonia –
into this globe which shows up how the fern shares
the invertebrate lace of the sea-horse.

"Lace", though, has earlier suggested the sort of language Boland is seeking, and acts as a pointer to what follows the turn of the poem. "And in my late thirties, past the middle way, / I can say how did I get here?" The question would be embarrassing if the "signs" it found were not in the subject of the poem – "Earth stars, rock spleenwort, creeping fig / and English ivy". The "English ivy" looks back to the childhood of "Fond Memory" in which she hears her father play "the slow / lilt of Tom Moore".

I thought this is my country, was, will be again,
this upward-straining song made to be
our safe inventory of pain. And I was wrong.

"The Bottle Garden" describes her as "a gangling schoolgirl" reading the *Aeneid* in "the convent library". Her own entrapment finds an emblem in that poem's Stygian seclusion, but she will here escape through the "open weave", tellingly clothed, of "harbour lights" from the uniform she is already outgrowing. Implicitly, she will slip out like an "invertebrate", like a sea-horse or the oldest, toughest of plants with which she shares her "lace" of language. This poem moves well beyond McGuckian's privacies, for "Mise Eire" has already told us how she fears Ireland, "the small farm / the scalded memory" – burned and poetized – where "songs / . . . bandage up history". Boland's "poetic of imprisoned meanings" is much less "imprisoned" than it looks, as shown by the unpunctuated leap between stanzas in "The Bottle Garden", and in the way so many of the poems in this book feed into one another by the lightest allusive touches. The domestic can be brushed by the political, the erotic by the commonplace.

Of the other kind of poem there are three examples, "The Journey", "Envoi" and "Lis-

ten. This is the Noise of Myth". "Envoi" invokes a muse, a female Christ:

If she will not bless the ordinary,
if she will not sanctify the common,
then here I am and here I stay and then am I
the most miserable of women.

Such an open statement of intent, blurred by inconsequential myth-making, wrecks all three poems. Instead of an artful "open weave" we have willed effort. When she conceals her art, Eavan Boland can be memorable and unnervingly honed, but when she does not she is hardly an artist at all. This is a generous, if slim, volume, though, and for the most part furtive and deadly.

A regional roll-call

Sean O'Brien

JOHN HEWITT
Freehold
71pp. Belfast: Blackstaff. £4.95.
085640 3628

Freehold is a gathering rather than a new collection. John Hewitt died, aged nearly eighty, at the end of June, and this book spans fifty years of his distinguished writing career, offering in the title piece a sequel to *Connare*, as well as the radio verse-play *The Bloody Brae* and a dozen more-or-less recent poems. The most interesting items are "Ulster Names" and its 1984 "Postscript". In the original, which dates from the 1950s, and is a celebratory naming-glancing back to "American Names" and perhaps forward to Seamus Heaney, Hewitt declares:

I take my stand by Ulster names,
each clean hard name like a weathered stone;
Tyrella, Rostrevor, are flickering flames:
the names I mean are the Moy, Malone,
Strabane, Slieve Gullion and Portlengone.

The nightmare history of Ulster since the 1960s compels a far grimmer response in the mid-eighties:

The years decieved; our unforgiving hearts,
by myth and old antipathies betrayed,
flared into sudden acts of violence
in daily shocking bulletins relayed.

The last of the bards

Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

DAIBHÍ Ó BRUADAIR
Selected Poems
Translated by Michael Hartnett
53pp. Dublin: Gallery Books. £6.90.
(paperback, £3.90).
0904011 917

A lively faith in the possibility of poetry migrating from one language to another is a good qualification for translating Daibhí Ó Bruadair. Michael Hartnett believes that the frontiers between languages are open and as a poet has called attention to his own shifts of domicile. He retreated into Gaelic after *A Farewell to English*, only to reappear on the borderlands with bilingual publications, translations and more recently original poems in English again.

His approach to Ó Bruadair, as the introduction to this book relates, was made by way of the poet's legend. The seventeenth-century poet's arrogance and obsessive concentration on the craft of poetry, his ardent loyalty to patrons, his coarse satire and his intense dislike of English language and social mobility, give him a memorable profile. He took himself to be, and in a sense was, the last of the bards. His metres and language are recondite and studied to a degree, making him more forbidding than contemporaries who belonged to the same Munster milieu: the older Piaras Feiritéar and the younger Aogán Ó Rathaille. His poems are mostly occasional: epithalamion, elegy; burlesque accounts of the refusal of a glass of beer on credit or the obtaining of a shirt without payment; serious, long poems on the Popish Plot or the need to accept the Articles of the Treaty of Limerick.

Gaelic daisies

Patricia Craig

DOUGLAS HYDE
The Songs of Connacht
Edited by Brendan O'Connor
156pp. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. £15
(paperback, £7.50).
07165 05274

The publishing history of Douglas Hyde's *Songs of Connacht* is rather odd, for something envisaged as a complete collection. The first part to appear between hard covers was Chapter Four, love songs, brought out as a separate publication in 1893. A further chapter, on

and through our dark dream-dotted consciousness
hosted like banners in some black parade.

The map of Ulster now is "not to be read as pastoral again". Elsewhere Hewitt has doubted if poetry has "made any difference", and the despairing note in a voice committed to reason and reasonableness is saddening but understandable. Yet here I think Hewitt's pessimism has betrayed his art. If the subject of "hosted" is "hearts", the image is a grotesque poeticism, born, one suspects, of urgency outstripping thought. The inversions in the second and fourth lines, too, are questionable. In combination they suggest an untypical surrender to rhetoric, which begs the question: if poetry *does* nothing, what must it be? The answer "rigorous" is only partial: its invention must refuse to be dispossessed by horror.

The rest of the recent work is for the most part unexceptionable and unremarkable. "Colonial Consequence" is a neat satire displaying a well-earned contempt for politicians who come bearing solutions. Its effortless iambs point up Hewitt's comparative lack of ease in freer forms, where he tends to lack grace and propulsion, though one suspects that this has more to do with lack of conviction than lack of ability. Whether "Bifocal in Gaza", a meticulous and intensely visual account of Hewitt's struggle with the threat of blindness succeeds as art I am uncertain. As a record of courage and as evidence of a lifelong care for detail it makes remarkable and shaming reading.

"The Shipwreck" ("An Longbhriseadh"), ends with a passage often quoted; the poet looks back on his career:

There was no win or loss that shadowed our
people here
that for forty or more Novembers I did not weave . . .

If they became free I'd hoped to be quite well off
(minor civil servant, lacking to some toll):
but after all that, here in old shoes I stand –
so much for my writing for the men of Ireland.

To translate "An Longbhriseadh" almost entire – only two quatrains omitted out of forty-one – is a major act of faith. While it shows the poet's range, from pathos to savagery to pride, it also demonstrates a major difficulty of these poems: they are long, but also constricted, in the emphatic, elevated compression of the quatrain which forbids expansion or relaxation into paragraphs, and is governed by more or less strict rules on the succession of vowel sounds. The fidelity achieved in the translation of this poem is remarkable, accurately rendering meaning, rhythm and sound. As well as Ó Bruadair's craftsmanship, his immediacy becomes abruptly visible. As he observed in "The Triumph of Patrick Sarsfield", the historians will have their say later; he wants his "while the flood lasts".

In some other poems the translator has conceded defeat, offering versions of only a few stanzas of a long work. Sometimes he follows up hints in the vocabulary which distort the meaning, as in the invariable use of "bag" to translate "cailleach", which often in Ó Bruadair's context means "slut", or "gallie agents" for "gallachaire" (foreign clerks), which preserves the sound but makes no sense. Michael Hartnett has set out to voice an obsession to be taken over by the spirit of the dead poet; it is not surprising that occasionally the reverse has happened.

songs ascribed to the poet Raftery, followed ten years later; and two chapters on religious songs appeared in 1906. The first three chapters, meanwhile, were "buried in Irish newspapers" – as Yeats observed in his 1893 review of the *Amhráin Gradha* (Love Songs) – and there they stayed until the present edition, where they are brought together for the first time: "Songs of O'Carolan", "Songs Praising Women" and "Drinking Songs".

Hyde's *Love Songs*, which alerted many people to the literary riches going unexploited in the west, was one of the key books in the Irish Revival of the 1890s and 1900s. Believing, as he did, that "one of the most valuable heritages of the Irish race" is its folk songs, Hyde had set off on his field work at an early age, determined to get down on paper as much of this national asset as he could. He had been born in 1860, son of a Church of Ireland rector, and grew up in Co Roscommon, where Irish was still current, if only just. At nineteen, Hyde joined the society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, and went on to formulate certain ideas about the need to de-anglicize Ireland – to further which end the Gaelic League, his creation, came into being in 1893. His efforts on behalf of Irish were applauded by Yeats (who took him for a proper peasant when they first met in 1885), and by Maud Gonne, to whom he tried to teach the language (without success). His own Irish, as it happened, didn't always pass muster with native speakers, and the fact that he chose to publish his verses under the pen-name of "An Craobhín Aoihbhinn" (the Sweet Little Branch) laid him open to some ridicule, at the time and later. Flann O'Brien, for instance, once took a swipe at Hyde and his feyness by compiling an imaginary list of such enthusiasts' pseudonyms as the Gaelic Daisy, the Branchy Tree and the Sweet Little Kiss.

Each chapter of Hyde's *Songs of Connacht* contains the text – in Irish on the left-hand page and English on the right – of various songs and poems taken down from Irish-speakers (some suffering from faulty memories), with accompanying comments. Hyde always keeps in mind the virtual impossibility of coming on an entire and unadulterated version of anything, after a century and more of oral transmission, and the consequent peculiarity of some of the songs. "There was many a word in this I did not well understand, and, no doubt, verses are missing", he acknowledges on more than one occasion, in English as close as he can get it to the texture of his rather rough-and-ready Gaelic. He never hesitates to admit himself at a loss: "I have not discovered whether it was himself [Carolan] or some other bard who composed it [a song entitled "Móirín Ní Dhubhda"], or, indeed, anything else about it"; "Here is another song that was composed in honour of one Kitty MacKay or MacFhugh, but I know nothing more about her". It was left to later linguists and folklorists to sort the songs into their proper constituent parts, as far as this is possible, and to rectify wrong attributions: for example, it is now generally accepted that "An Bonnán Buidhe" ("The Yellow Bittern") was the work of a Co Louth poet of the eighteenth century called Cathal Buidhe Mac Giolla Guanna, and not O'Carolan, as Hyde avers.

Confusions and conflations abound; Hyde seems to have been rather unlucky, as far as inducing feats of memory and lucidity in his informants is concerned ("It is very difficult now to get even the great original songs exactly as they were at first composed", he said). The translating in these chapters, too, is done in a literal and very cumbersome way; there is nothing here to touch the clarity and simplicity of his most celebrated effort in this line, "My Grief on the Sea", from the *Love Songs*.

Hyde was, however, anxious to help learners of the language by presenting as scrupulously as possible his English equivalents of the Irish words and phrases; he left lyricism, by and large, to other translators (like Padraic Colum), who would make good use of his groundwork. Since his principal hope was to reanimate Irish, he didn't much care how odd his English sounded – "My heart is being spoiled", it is known not a sheep from a beaver. . . . And so, with his translations and his enthusiasm for a dying tradition, he helped to make distinctiveness in Anglo-Irish writing.

The purchase of Paradise

R. H. Hilton

MIRI RUBIN
Charity and Community in Medieval
Cambridge
365pp. Cambridge University Press. £30.
0521 323924

Poverty and charity in medieval Christian Europe presented many problems to contemporaries – and subsequently to historians. The topic has been much discussed in recent years. Most of the fundamental issues were posed by the contributors to the Paris seminar organized by Michel Mollat (*Etudes sur l'histoire de la pauvreté*, 1974). How were the poor to be defined? In the early Middle Ages they were often thought of as the opposite not so much of the rich, but of the powerful. Poverty was, of course, early on perceived also as being the deprivation of worldly goods, the lack of food and clothing. Even so, poor smallholders and manual workers in permanent employment would not necessarily qualify as poor, however deprived. It was social marginals without resources, and especially the aged and the sick, who were most readily recognized as such.

But this was the least of the problems. Here was a society devoted to the worship of the Incarnation of God in a man who, at any rate before the fourteenth century, was thought to be propertyless, as were his apostles. How did the rich, and especially the wealthy landowning Church, face up to the existence of poverty among their fellow Christians? Just as the harmonious coexistence of the different orders of society – the knights, the priests, the working peasantry – was theoretically assumed, so the necessary coexistence of rich and poor had to be posited. Hincmar, the ninth-century Archbishop of Reims, expressed the view that

the poor existed so that the rich might be redeemed through acts of charity. So the idea developed that charity was to be provided for the poor, not so much for their benefit, but because it was a form of intercession which would aid those who gave it in their search for salvation.

The problem of the existence of the poor was still not solved. Currents in the Church, some heretical, some orthodox, continued to insist on the holiness of poverty, especially if it was voluntarily assumed. Pope Innocent III shrewdly allowed the institutionalization of these feelings by the creation of the Dominican and Franciscan propertyless and mendicant orders. But whatever the success, over a long term, of these friars, their dependence on begging for their existence and their intrusion on the privileges of the secular clergy (confession, burial, etc) generated a hostility not only to them but to the very idea of the holiness of poverty. Masters of the University of Paris, such as William of St Amour and Gerard d'Abbeville, polemicized against them, and the belief that Christ had no property was declared heretical by Pope John XXII in 1323. The desanctification of poverty was further encouraged after the population collapse following the Black Death, not because poverty increased but because a shortage of labour both put up wages and encouraged a labour mobility, which the lords and employers, who were losing their once docile employees, branded as vagabondage. The preaching of the work ethic and the distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor was well under way in the mid-fourteenth century.

Miri Rubin's book covers many of these well-known themes and attempts to focus attention, not only on individual charity, which she covers in her last chapter, but on the contribution of an urban community. Some

burghesses of Cambridge in the early thirteenth century founded the Hospital of St John the Evangelist within the town limits – in fact, adjacent to the Jewry. It was to become a religious community, informally under the Augustinian rule. Having acquired an oratory and two appropriated parishes, it came under ecclesiastical control, though leading burghesses continued to take a special interest in it. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the Hospital was run by a Master and five or six clerical brethren. About half a dozen lay brethren did what heavy work there was. The numbers of poor and sick inmates are unknown; the author guesses at about twelve. She also describes thirteen other urban and rural hospitals and almshouses in Cambridgeshire, the latter mostly of fourteenth and fifteenth-century foundation. What is striking is how few poor were received as inmates, in some almshouses only three. Many of these institutions, like the Hospital of St John, tended in effect to become chantries for prayers for the souls of benefactors. By the end of the fifteenth century their functions would be largely liturgical. The problem of poverty, whether urban or rural, could hardly have been more than nibbled at. The liturgical and intercessory character of these institutions clearly appears; the absence of genuine care for the poor is obvious.

One presumes that the title of this book implies that the burghess community of Cambridge supported charitable institutions, but apart from the fact that the section on the development of Cambridge borough is not much of a contribution to urban history, it is to be doubted whether the evidence quoted about burghess interest in the Hospital shows more than the involvement of a few individuals. One should be careful about the use of an embracing term like "community". Even Dr

tion (whose growth is part of the history of English government itself) and a subordinate politics, dominated in the thirteenth century by families that were part of a wider aristocratic web. Merely to sketch a British background is not enough: in this as in later periods what we are schooled to think of as "Irish history" and "English history" are in some respects the same flesh. The Hibernocentric view impoverishes the history of Ireland by withdrawing it from its context; at its crudest (and it is certainly not at its crudest here), it empties events of their contemporary meaning and substitutes a string of false significations.

By the time D. B. Quinn takes up his pen to cover 1460–1534 some of the earlier connections had faded, as the area of direct royal government shrank. Yet it is in his contribution that we find the most satisfactory handling of the Anglo-Irish link, and indeed of politics in general. The passages where he shows how the historian can bring Ireland's unstable assemblage of regional politics into relation with one another and also associate them with the metropolitan scene (the Pale becomes "a fulcrum for action") are outstanding. His analytical gifts would have strengthened some earlier parts of the book.

Quinn's measured chapters, alert to the limits of present knowledge and to some of the directions of modern research, perhaps come closest to achieving the goals Moody had in mind. That benevolent but exacting sage would also have approved of P. W. Aspin's bibliography, which will be much thumbed by those trying to cope with a literature scattered through dozens of elusive periodicals. He might even have enjoyed the charming footnote in which the late Françoise Henry and Geneviève Marsh-Michell, joint authors of a lively chapter on manuscripts and illuminations, confess that they cannot agree.

The book is bound to sharpen our awareness of the undeveloped state of many aspects of medieval Irish history, which remains a curiously innocent world. But one closes it grateful that a good deal is well done and that not too much has been done badly. Perhaps the chief feeling is one of surprise to see it done at all: that it has reached the printed page says much for the varied talents of its final editor, Art Cosgrove.

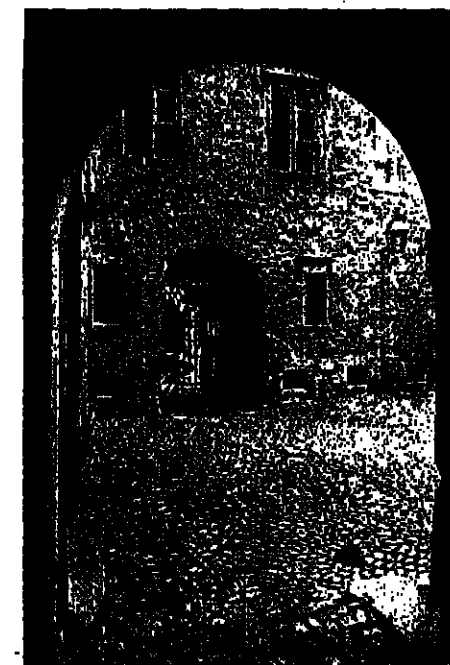
Taking the Hibernocentric view

Robin Frame

ART COSGROVE (Editor).
A New History of Ireland: Volume Two
Medieval Ireland, 1169–1534
982pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £75.
019217412

As the *New History of Ireland* inches forward, a decade or more behind schedule, it offers an easy target to its critics: many of them were in short trousers when the late T. W. Moody launched the grand enterprise. The present beautifully produced volume, which covers one of the more neglected phases of Irish history, displays most of the weaknesses of the genre. Needless to say, its nineteen authors cannot present a coherent view of the period. It is uneven in quality and tone, though on the whole it improves as it goes along. Its vast bulk is attained partly through overlapping. At the same time, the chapters commissioned from specialists in literature, architecture and so forth, allow them little room; some of them are pushed perilously close to the sort of inventory that once inhabited the remotest recesses of textbooks. And then, of course, there has been a long delay in publication. The editors tell us that "most of the contributions were completed by 1973, but all authors were given the opportunity to revise their material during 1982–3". Their responses to this invitation are not recorded (shall we live to savour a *History of the New History?*) but it is clear in many cases that the publications of the last years, while they may be mentioned, have not been absorbed or engaged. This is a pity, but not the fault of those who got their chapters far on time.

There is, however, one charge of which the book may be acquitted. Gargantuan national histories are sometimes suspected of aspiring to omniscience. But although the dust-jacket speaks of "a harvesting of modern scholarship", the editors were well aware how little there often was to gather in. The economy was a particular gap; indeed not so long ago the *Cambridge History of Ireland* was being directed to the writings of Mrs Stopford Green. Younger scholars – Kevin Down, Wendy Childs and Timothy O'Neill – were brought in to fill it; the



The outer courtyard of Rothe House, Kilkenny; a photograph reproduced from *The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland* by T. B. Barry (234pp. Methuen, £25.0416303609).

results of their investigations form a base from which work on colonial agrarian society and overseas trade can at last proceed. Also a success is Kenneth Nicholls's original, erudite and taxing chapter on Gaelic society and economy, which takes us to the frontiers of current research. So too, in a different key, is J. A. Watt's brave and thoughtful essay on Gaelic polity and cultural identity, which goes some way beyond them.

Problems arise less in such areas of recognized difficulty than in regions we might suppose – quite wrongly – to be well charted. Anglo-Irish relations, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, are a case in point. That they are treated inadequately is partly a result of lack of available research: there is still scarcely any modern work on the years 1216–96, and recent publications on the period 1318–99 appeared too late to be assimilated. The trouble also springs from the very Irish perspective the volume mostly takes for granted. Ireland had a subordinate administra-

Rubin makes it clear that Cambridge was class-divided in the later Middle Ages, and no doubt earlier, although she has rosy ideas about the leading citizens of twelfth and thirteenth-century towns "developing an ethos of duty and co-operation in which the common weal became a cherished value entrusted to their hands".

In fact, the central theme of the book is St John's Hospital as a religious institution. The author describes its foundation, deals with its relationship with other institutions, enumerates its endowments (about 70 per cent being made in the thirteenth century) and considers its important role in the local and regional land market. An interesting example of its "charitable" function is also described, the provision of long and short-term loans to momentarily embarrassed (though not poor) townspeople. The loans quoted were not, of course, openly usurious, though it would seem that the exchange of a cash grant for a perpetual rent could be interpreted as at about 10 per cent interest for ever. Was this less than the 43 per cent charged by Jewish money-lenders, which stopped when the loan was repaid? It was not always repaid and the Jewish money-lenders were often left with land deposited with them as security. Here again, says Rubin, the Hospital makes another charitable gesture by paying the debt and getting the land cheap.

St John's Hospital, having abandoned its care for the poor, concentrated on its liturgical function, offered lodgings to university scholars and became, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a college. It is a worthwhile subject of study and well illustrates an aspect of changing attitudes, from charity for the poor to the concentration on what has been called "the purchase of Paradise". Rubin provides a large quantity of comparative material, though the accumulation of detail tends to blur the coherence of the theme. Even so, the many footnote references to European and English parallels will be of great use to historians, as will the ample bibliography.

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Leaving it to the locals

T. J. Cornell

J.S. RICHARDSON
Hispaniae: Spain and the development of Roman imperialism, 218-82 BC
218pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0521321832

In this interesting book J. S. Richardson examines the history of Roman military involvement in Spain in the Republic, and the development of institutions of imperial government in the Spanish provinces down to 82 BC.

Its principal arguments are, first, that a formal structure of administration was very slow to emerge; and second, that it resulted not from the deliberate policy of the Roman government, but from *ad hoc* measures taken by commanders on the spot. For many years after the arrival of Roman troops (in 218 BC), the Spanish *provinciae* remained a war zone, and the magistrates (we must not call them governors) were no more than military commanders. Richardson insists that we should refer to "provinciae" in the strict sense of areas of military responsibility assigned to magistrates, rather than to "provinces" in the sense of administrative districts. A formal mechanism for appointing commanders was first instituted in 179 BC: regular taxation was only imposed in 179 BC by Tiberius Gracchus (the father of the famous reformers), who also established formal relationships with native communities and created the first rudimentary administrative framework. Only much later do we find Roman magistrates operating in the legal and judicial sphere, most notably in a new inscription recording a judgment in a local dispute by a praetor in 87 BC.

Richardson repeatedly stresses the Senate's indifference to provincial administration. Its functions were "to allot the two *provinciae* as areas of military responsibility, to provide the necessary resources to the magistrates and promagistrates who held that responsibility, and to reward military success by the award of triumphs". For the rest the Fathers were content to leave it to the magistrates to make administrative and military decisions. After c.150 BC the Senate became more interested in Spain, but Richardson argues that its enactments were intended "not to influence or direct the affairs of the province, but to circumscribe the actions of provincial commanders".

The suggestion is that Roman involvement in Spain is an example of "peripheral imperialism", a concept borrowed from modern historians, who explain nineteenth-century imperialism by reference to local events in the colonial territories and the activities of "men on the spot". The comparison is apt, because Rome, as a warrior society ruled by a competitive and militaristic elite, owed its empire largely to the initiative of individual leaders in pursuit of personal objectives (the classic case is Caesar's conquest of Gaul). The Senate's failure to control these men contributed to the fall of the Republic, and it is not a coincidence that imperial expansion ceased under the Principate, when the Senate's role was taken over by emperors who curtailed the activities of individual commanders. At that point, we might argue, the centre began to assert its control over the periphery.

But the principal objection to theories of peripheral imperialism is that they presuppose what needs to be explained, namely the presence of "men on the spot" and the existence of local colonial interests. Why did the Romans maintain a military presence in Spain? After all, their policy in other areas did not entail permanent military commitment but rather its avoidance. Richardson attempts to deny the existence of this contrast: "what the Romans were doing in Spain was essentially the same as what they were doing in the Greek east, that is using all means available to ensure that the peoples of the Mediterranean did what the Romans wanted them to do". But this argument not only begs the question; it also conflicts with the view that the Senate had no interest in Spanish affairs.

Richardson implies that a military presence in Spain gave the magistrates something to do. But the fact that in 197 BC the number of praetors had to be increased shows that there were not enough magistrates available for the *provinciae*, rather than the other way round.

More probably the answer is that the Spanish provinces gave the Roman army something to do. The maintenance of large armies was something in which the Roman ruling class had a vested interest; and the fact that more than half of Rome's armed strength was contributed by the Italian allies at their own expense made continuous military activity both possible and necessary, as Arnaldo Momigliano has pointed out.

Another explanation which Richardson does not take sufficiently into account is that of W. V. Harris, who argues that the Romans pursued war and imperial expansion for financial profit. Spain provided not only booty but also substantial revenues from taxation and the exploitation of mineral resources. Polybius noted that the silver mines at Cartagena produced 25,000 drachmas a day (not 2,500, as stated on p. 120, evidently a misprint). I do not understand why Richardson thinks that this

text implies a system of locally organized mining contracts leased out by the magistrates in Spain, rather than the normal system of five-year contracts sold by the censors in Rome. But if he is right, it follows that the Roman magistrates in Spain were more than just military commanders, and had fiscal responsibilities; and given the amounts in question it is unthinkable that senators in Rome did not try to ensure that the collection of revenues from the Spanish mines was efficiently organized.

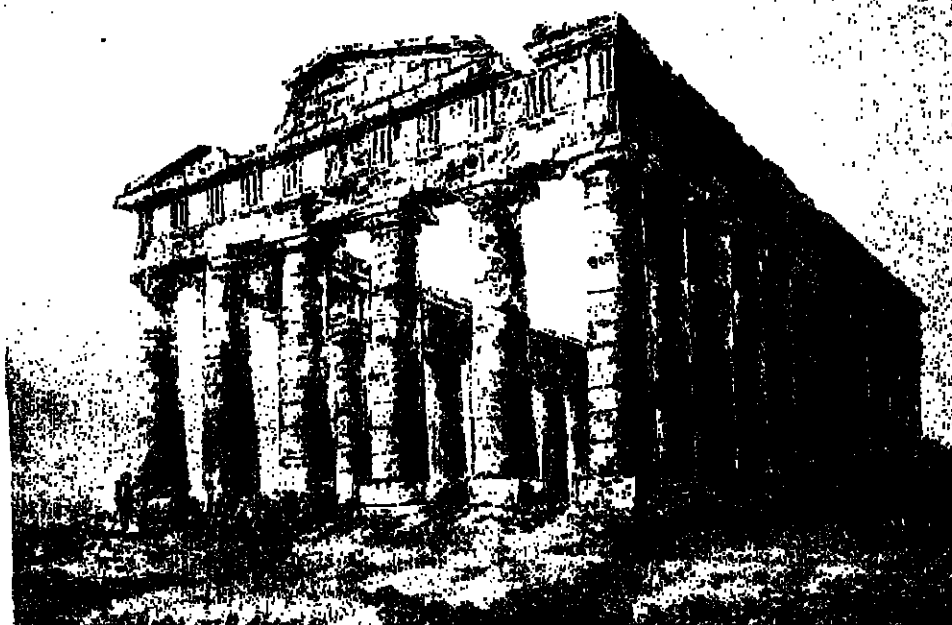
For other reasons too it seems unlikely that the Senate was as little concerned with Spain as Richardson maintains. His suggestion that Spain was a faraway place of which the senators knew little is misleading. His model seems to be the inappropriate one of the House of Commons, an ill-informed and parochial assembly by any standards, but especially so in comparison with the Roman Senate, whose members had wide experience and direct

knowledge of the Mediterranean empire under their control. This feature of the Senate has to my mind been overlooked in modern studies. In the second century BC all senators had done military service in the provinces, and Spain was the area they knew best (apart from Italy). More than half of them had served in Spain and had first-hand knowledge of conditions there; and many would have established (or inherited) personal ties with indigenous elites and communities, whose interests they were bound to protect. That they allowed the magistrates a free hand and turned a blind eye to misconduct is scarcely credible.

Richardson's argument is largely determined by the silence of the sources and his general assumption that for forty years Roman Spain was no more than a war zone in which all administrative matters were arranged *ad hoc*. For example, the fact that provincial allocations and triumphal awards are the only items of provincial business to be systematically recorded in the sources does not prove that the Senate was not interested in anything else. More probably it indicates that they were the only items to be listed in the documents used by Roman historians. It is probably also the focus of the sources that has led Richardson to concentrate so heavily on the individual magistrates (he defines his task as an investigation of their activities). This distinctive bias has probably caused him to exaggerate the role of "men on the spot" in the development of military policy and administrative practice.

Finally, the sources are notoriously romano-centric, and have little interest in the Spanish provinces as such. The same is true of this book, which examines the development of Roman policy from an exclusively Roman point of view. It has a brief section on Iberian geography, but nothing on the society or culture of the native peoples, on their political structures, on the nature of the rural economy or on patterns of settlement. This is unfortunate, because these subjects are highly relevant to Richardson's theme. It is also a pity that we are not given more idea of how the subject has been affected by recent archaeological research. Richardson could have written with authority on these matters, about which he is an acknowledged expert.

On its own terms the book is useful and has novel things to say about legal and constitutional aspects of Roman government; but it is less a book about Spain than its title suggests.



The Temple at Segesta, a watercolour by Jakob Philipp Hackert (1777) reproduced from Richard Payne Knight's *Expedition into Sicily*, edited by Claudia Stumpf (80pp. British Museum. £10. 0 7141 1627 0).

Missing out the culture

Martin Henig

JOHN WACHER (Editor)
The Roman World
Two volumes, 872pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £100 the set.
0710099754

The publication of these two volumes has been advertised as an important event. The editor, John Wacher, has assembled a team of authors who are all recognized authorities on their subjects and, by and large, they have produced useful survey articles. Yet despite the good intentions of all concerned, this attempt at revealing the Roman world to our time falls lamentably. It does so for two reasons, both of which could have been foreseen at the planning stage: the coverage is idiosyncratic and the attempts of the authors to identify their readership reveal a confusion fatal in a study which, considering its length, can only be introductory.

With regard to coverage, it appears that here "the Roman World" means the Empire of the first four centuries AD; the Republic features in an introductory section (together with chapters about Hellenistic influence on the Roman World and (for some reason), the Celtic peoples of Europe (as well as, briefly, in the part dealing with the army). Readers who seek in this book for background, archaeological, economic or cultural, to their studies of Livy, Cicero or Sallust will be sorely disappointed. Military affairs occupy a full third of Volume One, considerably more than the section on urbanization, although the city and town life were the essential justification of Roman culture

(however nostalgically Roman poets wrote about the countryside). The Roman army must have seemed, to those not directly involved with it, as irrelevant to Roman life as the armed services do to life in twentieth-century Britain. Only a single chapter is given to art. Much more might have been made of architecture than appears in the chapter on urbanization in the West; what about the great building schemes of the Levant and North Africa, not to mention architectural developments in Rome itself? And the social place of architecture, especially of baths, circuses and amphitheatres, deserves fuller exploration. Most disturbing of all is the complete absence of that which for many makes the study of Rome worth while: her literature. In the days when the cultural contribution really mattered to students of antiquity it would have been unthinkable to publish a general work without chapters on poetry, philosophy and historiography. In this respect a much shorter book published twenty-seven years ago, Michael Grant's *The World of Rome*, is far more intelligently balanced, with one part on the State and society (doubtless in need of expansion), another on the beliefs held by the Romans and another on literature and the arts.

This leads on to the failure to identify the readership. Some writers, including notably R. S. O. Tomlin on the army of the Late Empire and Mark Hassall on Romans and non-Romans, have taken their brief as being to write for the intelligent public that wishes to proceed a step beyond preliminary works of which Grant's is a good example. Other authors, admittedly on technical subjects — Charles Dandridge on the African frontier and Dorothy Thompson on imperial estates, for

example — clearly felt they were writing for the specialist reader of *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. Two authors dealing with branches of the same topic at the — surely right — level of Tomlin and Hassall can, nevertheless, produce such disparate work that it makes one long for a firmer editorial hand. Barbara Levick writes of urbanization in the Eastern Empire with insight and style but her only illustration is a map; J. F. Drinkwater uses twenty-eight figures and fourteen plates to make his points about urbanization in the West; thus we get a much clearer idea of what a city in the West looked like and a better feel for what it felt like *actually to live in* an Eastern city of the old Greek world.

The Roman World demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of Roman studies in British universities. Leaving aside the failure to consult any authority on Latin literature, one observes the dominance of studies of the army and the frontiers, which have sometimes assumed a stranglehold on departments of Roman archaeology, and the healthy state of studies of the Roman economy, which have made such strides in recent years (and are at last displacing some of the undue military emphasis). The lack of attention afforded here to art history is a reflection of the situation in the universities; T. F. C. Blagg puts up a brave show in his chapter, "Society and the Arts", but there is so much more to say on a topic that is central to how the Romans saw themselves. The sections on economy and on rural life contain much of worth. Any keen undergraduate would gain from reading A. J. Parker on Trade; and P. A. Brunt on Labour wants to be them, as one might expect, reminding us of the sad lot of the Roman poor.

Stalking the cemeteries

Francis Huxley

CHARLOTTE F. OTTEN (Editor)
A Lyncanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western culture
337pp. Syracuse University Press. \$32.50 (paperback, \$14.95).
0815623836

Charlotte Otten's interest in lycanthropy began with her discovery of the dual lycanthropy in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Lycanthropy had preoccupied many such as Webster during the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Contemporary authorities, besides indulging an audience with frightening fantasies, argued among themselves as to whether the phenomenon was something natural or supernatural. Court cases sometimes involved those who had been accused of lycanthropic crimes, or just lycanthropic behaviour. More recently the argument has been settled in favour of a naturalistic view of the problem, partly because real werewolves have become increasingly rare. Imagined ones, however, seem in no danger of extinction — there are more than fifty werewolf films and many werewolf books.

Dr Otten's primary materials on the subject are drawn from medicine, the law, history, philosophy, theology and myths, in order to throw light on certain aspects of history, on the human propensity for evil, and on the moral underpinnings of society.

The problem of lycanthropy centres around the horrifying transformation of the human into the inhuman. This is best evidenced through psychiatry — three modern instances are cited by Otten, the victims thinking themselves to be wolves, going down on all fours, roaming cemeteries, woods and isolated places, howling like wolves for raw flesh and raw sex, and with the satanic master of wolves lurking in the shadows. They have been variously poisoned, it seems, by resentments, loneliness, lusts, poverty of soul, low intelligence, drugs and satanic obsessions. A differential diagnosis must include consideration of the following possibilities: schizophrenia, organic brain syndrome with psychosis, psychotic depressive reaction, hysterical psychosis of the dissociative type, manic depressive psychosis and psychomotor epilepsy.

This is an impressive list, though its practical use in the treatment of the disorder is debatable; indeed, it is unclear whether it is a better aid to the understanding of lycanthropy than the old diagnosis of melancholia, which covered the same ground in its own terms. Robert Burton is the guide here, looking at the effects of black bile upon the system — the humoral system, of course, which manages to be a material psychology and a spiritual physiology in one. Otten also describes a humoral doctor who prided himself, as well he might, on curing a werewolf by bloodletting and purges.

All this is the legacy of classical medicine, which portrayed lycanthropy as a disease, its victims suffering from pallor, feeble vision, dry eyes and mouth, excessive thirst and a compulsion to wander at night in cemeteries and lonely places; its causes being brain disturbance, humoral dysfunction and the use of drugs. Marcellus of Sidon (not quoted in *A Lyncanthropy Reader*) noted in addition that it occurred with great regularity in February — which, of course, was the month of the Lupercalia in Rome. This is a valuable clue to the archaic and seasonal nature of lycanthropy, which chimed with a passage the *Reader* does include:

...werewolves in Livonia: here again it broke out every year, but now as a rule led by a man wearing an iron chain (who is Odin, though we are not told so) during the twelve days of Christmas. The *Reader* contains one interesting insight into the subject, in its very brief summary of the Navajo Coyoteway ceremony. This is for hunters who are overcome by a sense of guilt (and surely more than that?) — a hubristic an ecstatic lycanthropic as a prelude to exorcizing the malevolent spirit preying upon the affected hunter, and thus provides a cure rather than a remission of symptoms.

Such niceties of perception were impossible for the nineteenth-century Europe, with which the book is mainly concerned. At this time several aspects of lycanthropy were widely discussed. The most famous was that of

Jean Grenier in 1603, who confessed to being a werewolf and having an uncontrollable urge to devour the flesh of young girls; at his trial the court determined that he was incapable of rational thought, and that "the change of shape existed only in the disorganized brain of the insane, consequently it was not a crime that could be punished". Other victims of the disorder were not so fortunate.

The crux in these cases was to determine how it was possible for a man (or a woman) to think himself a wolf, how far the transformation really went, and what agencies were responsible. Such questions were the province of the clergy, of jurists, doctors and philosophers, as an article by Stuart Clark makes clear. The rationalist argument about witchcraft was taken up in 1589 by a German bishop, who explained that all apparently occult operations that were not in fact miracles could be ascribed in principle to physical causes. For whether or not any particular instance was actually demonic in inspiration, magic was simply the art of producing wonderful natural effects outside the usual course of things and above the common understanding of men; which meant that what was then called magic could be treated as a branch of physics or of natural science. Francis Bacon was not averse to this approach; by examining the superstitious narratives of sorcery, witchcraft, charms and the like, "a useful light might be gained, not only for the true judgment of the offences of persons charged with such practices, but likewise for the further

disclosing of the secrets of nature". The demonologists, on their side, had made it their business to expose the limitations, weaknesses and deceptions of the Devil; and investigations by exorcists might be said to be some of the first controlled experiments testing for the marks of true possession. For both demonologists and scientists found themselves faced with the need to clarify the exact causal status of demonic effects, the laws which they obeyed (and disobeyed), the criteria for distinguishing true and illusory aspects, and their place on the continuum from miracles through natural wonders to ordinary natural phenomena. There were four possible categories available to them: real or illusory demonic effects, real or illusory non-demonic ones. There was, in fact, a real epistemological debate going on, with demonology and science standing on the same ground and coming to much the same conclusions; and Sir Thomas Browne summed up much of the argument in his dictum, "What invented by us is Philosophy, learned from him [the Devil] is Magic."

We may also read an article here by Leland Eses suggesting that the European witchcraft craze might have been sparked off by the medical profession, which in the light of other crazes they have been responsible for seems quite possible.

The anthropology of the topic is taken up by Ellis Davidson, in "Shape-changing in the Old Norse Sagas". Here we find ourselves in an epic world, with shamans turning into animals

in order to fight each other, and with wolves and bears associated with rituals to do with battle. But the tales of shape-changing — though rooted in popular tradition — seem not to be told "for true", but for artistic purposes, "bringing in a touch of fantasy, excitement, humour or horror" to the proceedings as desired. The *Reader* also contains five werewolf legends: that of Lycan as told by Ovid; an Arthurian tale in which a man turns wolf when betrayed by his wife; a Breton legend; and two modern stories, the last one dealing with the deepest passion of love together with the deepest passion of hate, an allegory in which we discover how evil is seductive, and malevolence gracious.

The book is a collection of fragments which as a whole make a forlorn rattling of sense. Dr Otten's focus upon the Middle Ages and the Renaissance cuts off the view as successfully as Ovid's specious moralizing upon Lycan. For the man-wolf goes back to times before the Flood. Marcellus's lycanthropes are best thought of as would-be ecstasies, the masculine counterparts of the nuenas who welcomed Apollo on his return from Hyperborean parts at the same time of year.

Apollo also was called Lycan, though whether this originally meant "wolf" or "light" has always been debated by grammarians. An ecstatic who has found that the one meaning is both produced and exorcized by the other will have no such difficulties: but this *Reader* only obscures the issue.

Taboo or not taboo

Jean La Fontaine

W. ARENS
The Original Sin: Incest and its meaning
190pp. Oxford University Press. £18.50.
019 5037545

W. Arens starts with the refreshingly frank admission that his own discipline of anthropology has had nothing to contribute to the understanding of incest, for anthropologists have been so preoccupied with its prohibition, the incest taboo, that they have failed to notice that this may not be kept. His contention is that animals, including *homo sapiens*, avoid incest as the result of evolutionary processes in which outbreeding has conferred selective advantages. Human culture attributes symbolic meaning to this behaviour and to acts which run counter to it; it is the symbolic meaning of incest which explains why human beings break their own rules.

The Original Sin thus advances a sociological view of humanity but goes further than most contributions to the current debate in making use of the new information available on incest in Western societies and in attempting to explain why incest occurs. In his introduction, Arens sets out the complexities subsumed under the idea of a universal incest taboo: not only are the relationships covered by the taboo different in different societies but so are attitudes to the possibility of its violation, and to the consequences thought to follow. His conclusion, that the concept of incest is a Western one and that it is not possible to speak of a universal taboo, is unexceptional and would be widely accepted among social anthropologists.

He might not accept the view he advances later, however, that this very variability indicates that some mechanism other than the cultural regulation of sexual behaviour must underlie its common features, and that this mechanism is what our species has in common with others, the avoidance of inbreeding.

The explanation of incest as a pattern of sexual behaviour common to all animals is the hallmark of Arens's sociobiological approach. He presents it as depending on scientific (and hence morally neutral) facts, but involving decisions as to which data are relevant that are much less objective than they seem. Thus, he notes that in Western societies incest includes homosexual relations within the family, and that in certain New Guinea societies where ritual homosexuality is practised, participants are forbidden to engage in them with the same range of kin with whom heterosexual relations are also prohibited. He dismisses the former

data as concerning prohibitions "unrelated to the problem at hand", but observes that homosexual restrictions indicate that "a society may take into consideration matters other than reproduction in deciding on proper sexual partners". Another example is the general ban in Western society on having sexual relations with children, which is often violated in incest but which Arens ignores. Thirty years ago Jack Goody suggested that incest could only be understood in the context of a society's regulation of sexual behaviour as a whole, an argument Arens fails to deal with. He admits that the data he discards lend support to the contention that the incest taboo is not biological in origin, but asserts rather than argues for a definition of what is relevant that maintains the equation between incest and inbreeding.

Arens considers anthropological writing on the incest taboo in some detail, arguing that the failure to achieve a satisfactory explanation of it and anthropologists' unwillingness to consider incest itself are related to their tenacity in clinging to the conviction that there is a qualitative divide between humanity and other animals. But he fails to recognize that the opposing view stems from an equally stubborn adherence to a moral position which goes back, at least, to the Enlightenment. Its modern variant, sociobiology, can equally be presented as an attempt to substantiate the dogma that humanity is part of the natural world, different only in degree, not kind, and susceptible of explanation in the same terms. It is not, as Arens appears to believe, a battle between "Science" and a traditional view of mankind, but an argument between those who see order in society or culture and those who perceive it as a perversion of the order of nature.

Arens sets out the well-worn cases of the Israeli kibbutz studied by Spiro, and Wolf's work on adopted daughters-in-law in Taiwan, and argues from these that individuals brought up together from childhood develop a sexual aversion which predisposes them to seek mates elsewhere. This is then generalized into the conclusion that there is a "natural" aversion to mating with familiar kin which can be compared with evidence from the mating patterns of animals. He asserts that animals avoid inbreeding and that the observations which support this conclusion "hold primarily for mother-son and sibling relations, since multiple matings prior to conception often make it impossible for the observers to determine paternity". But this is the weak link in the chain of reasoning and Arens does nothing to strengthen it. If paternity cannot be determined, then neither can genetic relations which depend on

paternal connections; the "sibling relations" are merely those which can be identified, between offspring of the same female. Half the evidence on inbreeding in animals is missing. Moreover, where paternity is identifiable, there appears to be little avoidance of father-daughter mating and Arens, like the other authorities he cites, accepts that this appears to be a purely cultural rule. Yet he, and they, continue to refer to the avoidance of incest as though the studies of animal behaviour had established a parallel with all the behaviour covered by this term. One suspects that a fundamental assumption about human nature is once again being protected.

The second part of the thesis that Arens advances is much more interesting even if his exposition of the cultural reasons which impel human beings to commit incest is not completely convincing. He makes an acceptable distinction between societies in which incest is the privilege of individuals believed to be endowed with non-human, hence divine, powers and others where incest is an entirely deviant act. With the former he argues that incest is symbolic, either because it involves a marriage in name only, which prevents the establishment of an alternative female line with claims to the throne, or part of a ritual which creates supernatural power in the ruler. However it is difficult to claim, without careful argument, that people who commit incest in Western society do so because it holds similar meanings for them. Arens cites the conclusion reached by Herman that father-daughter incest in the West is a manifestation of power, though he seems to take the word power here to indicate an identity between the ritual enactment of divine authority and the abuse of the weak, often by the exertion of physical force. But there is no evidence that the individuals concerned or society generally believe that incest confers power. Arens goes on to remark that father-daughter incest seems to be the commonest form in the West but does not conclude, as might be expected, that this is because the purely cultural rule against it is unsupported by natural avoidance. On the contrary, he makes the unsubstantiated generalization that it is a common feature of such cases that father and daughter have been separated at some stage of their lives.

The discovery of incest in our own society has presented students of human behaviour with a difficult problem. Professor Arens shows here that it is a topic which anthropologists should address. Unfortunately, his trail-blazing attempt is also a partisan exposition of a particular point of view; and this may obscure his genuine contribution.

The closed kind

Katharine Worth

JOHN PETER
Vladimir's Carrot: Modern drama and the
modern imagination
372pp. Deutsch. £17.95.
0 233 98014 8

A special interest attaches to books by authors who are more used to dispensing criticism than inviting it. John Peter, chief drama critic of *The Sunday Times* since 1984, has laid himself on the line with a profoundly ambitious study of the pictures of the world created by the modern imagination. *Vladimir's Carrot* is a large-scale, intensely serious, lively, controversial and curious work. Peter's Ariadne thread is his idea of "closed" as distinct from "open" form. Beckett's plays (with which the book begins and ends) are "closed"; that is to say, they tend to be circular, timeless, arbitrary and dream-like. They eschew cause and effect (a crucial part of the definition). And they refuse significance, hence perhaps morality. Vladimir's carrot "reveals nothing about anyone".

A worrying note is struck at the start by the author's comparison between the plays of Beckett and the "open" plays of Aeschylus or Ibsen. The latter type is seen as giving a full enough picture of the world for any audience to find a way into it. Its characters have a past and recognizable purposes: it is open to questioning. Beckett's world, says Peter, does not allow this. It is no good asking whether Pozzo and Lucky ever got to the fair, or what Jo Vladimir and Estragon do. Questions that are the lifeblood of a play like *Ghosts* have no place here. Perhaps, but it does not follow that Beckett denies us free responses.

Some nighty names crowd in to share with Beckett the responsibility (or blame) for the "closed" phenomenon. We enter the "circular hell" of Schopenhauer, dominated by the blind Will, meet the same irresistible force embodied in Tristan and Isolde or the superhuman figures of the *Ring*, caught up in a "pure, unadorned striving" which makes them seem forces of the mind rather than people. Wagner, like Schopenhauer, suggests Peter, may have needed to understand the world as an idea, "as if it were a single mind". Closed art, in fact, is "monological". It is pessimistic, too, and leans to stasis, as Peter illustrates from

some piquant transitions and cross-references. Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence links with reenactments of primal guilt-feelings in the Freudian world model and both with the repetitions of Proust and the nightmare journeys over the same ground in *The Trial* and *The Castle*. These worlds are essentially amoral, as Peter sees it. Things are not caused but occur, inexplicably and unchangingly. In the *Penal Settlement* "is probably the most amoral work of literature created by a painfully moral imagination".

By the time he returns to drama in his closing chapters Peter has created a formidable context for a theatre-centred discussion. It could almost be said that he commits a kind of "mental thuggee" himself (to borrow Beckett's humorous phrase for the process attributed to him in Peter's argument). We do start to see plays his way, in terms of open and closed, when, that is, he avoids rigid categorizing. He supplies some refreshing insights by tracing elements of the "closed" form in "open" plays and vice versa. Brecht might seem to belong unequivocally to the "open" category but *The Good Person of Setzuan*, Peter suggests, is weakened by the "faux-naïveté" of its setting, which frustrates reference out to the real world. "Open" Ibsen, too, is seen to move in the closed direction with the somnambulist characters of later plays like *The Master Builder*. And it is salutary to be reminded that Pinter may be more "open" than "closed" if we attend to the precision of his language.

Ibsen as well as Strindberg (and Maeterlinck, Appia, Craig) points the way to Beckett. That is not exactly a new thought, but the way Peter comes to it is certainly new; above all, in its extraordinary breadth of interest and knowledge. Sadly, he remains prejudiced against Beckett. It must surely be prejudice to deny even that mark of the "open" play which Peter identifies in the admission of books to the action. Admittedly Winnie in *Happy Days* has no books to hand but no one quotes more liberally. Depending on how much we have read (true of our responses to any written work), we are continually given chances to connect with other works.

The failure to recognize Beckett's special kind of openness (don't we want him to ask unanswerable questions for us?) is something of a blot. But otherwise any prejudices or quirks are bound up with the originality and agreeable verve of this absorbing study. Reading it is an invigorating experience.

Probing for the pain

Benedict Nightingale

B. A. YOUNG
The Rattigan Version: Sir Terence Rattigan and the theatre of character
288pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.
0 241 11951 0
PHILIP BARNES (Editor)
A Companion to Post-War British Theatre
320pp. Croom Helm. £18.95.
0 9099 3200 6

It's hard to date the change precisely; but some time before his death in 1977 Terence Rattigan's artistic reputation, which had spent the previous two decades floundering between the doldrums and the depths, began an upward climb which has continued quietly ever since. No longer was he patronized as a glib boulevardier, forever pondering to the prim groundling he called Aunt Edna. Increasingly, the existence of a second and more interesting Rattigan was recognized: one, with a special sympathy for loners and misfits, a special understanding of the compulsions and humiliating obsessions afflicting them. "I detect in his plays a deep personal, surely sexual pain", wrote his fellow-dramatist David Rudkin, summing him up as "someone peculiarly haunting and oblique who certainly speaks to me with resonance of existential bleakness and irresolvable carnal solitude".

To see the author of *The Deep Blue Sea* and *Separate Tables* as a blend of Strindberg and Beckett is no doubt to see too much. Nevertheless, it is an exaggeration in the right direction. Michael, Darlow, and Gillian, Hodson, were surely justified both in quoting Rudkin's cor-

rective view at the beginning of the biography of Rattigan they published in 1979 and in seeking explanations for that covert pain and surreptitious bleakness. And that meant, inescapably, invading their subject's posthumous privacy. Rattigan, it emerged, was a homosexual deeply at odds with an orientation he blamed, not without rancour, on his failed relationship with his frivolous, philandering father. The urbane surface concealed a troubled man and, by the end, a sad and lonely one, surrounded by "people who liked him but no one who really cared for him".

B. A. Young doesn't mention Darlow and Hodson in *The Rattigan Version* and, in any case, clearly has little time for their thesis. He skims over the father's failings with a one-sentence shrug, preferring to emphasize his generosity to the playwright-to-be. Rattigan's homosexuality he deals with cursorily, seeing it as one of several manifestations of "the boy who never grew up" and adding, in answer to the suggestion that he felt ashamed of it, that "he never made any effort to reorient his outlook". What Darlow and Hodson present as a growing dependence on "rough trade", something that came increasingly to worry his friends, Young dismisses as an occasional weakness, "of no more importance than the little romances indulged in by more normally sexed people". Rattigan emerges as an ambly overgrown schoolboy, who led a life "pretty well free from excitement, or passion, or tragedy, on a scale greater than touches the life of the average successful man".

If that is true, one is bound to ask, if he worth a memoir at all? Only (one might answer) if there are lively supporting characters to introduce, good reminiscences to share,

Destined for the stage

Andrew Sanders

H. PHILIP BOLTON
Dickens Dramatized
501pp. Mansell. £60.
0 7201 1804 2

On November 3, 1834, J. B. Buckstone's comic burlesque *The Christening* opened at the Adelphi Theatre in London. Buckstone's play was an adaptation of Dickens's sketch "The Bloomsbury Christening", which had appeared in print in *The Monthly Magazine* in the previous April, and Boz appears to have been in two minds about its speedy translation to the stage. The ambiguity remained a constant in Dickens's reactions to dramatizers of his fiction; as a showman himself, he was flattered by their attention and pleased by the attendant publicity, but he was also likely to be offended by their tendency to over-simplification and vulgarity. "The Christening", which continued to hold the stage (at least in New York) until well into the 1870s, was but the first of some 3,000 productions of dramas so far based on Dickens's fictions – a figure which beggars the comparable rate for Sir Walter Scott (a mere 750 in the nineteenth century and presumably a declining number since). Dickens's stage early novels were obviously ripe for the theatrical market, a fact which was triumphantly reasserted in the success (in all senses) of the Royal Shakespeare Company's version of *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1980, but they are merely the beginning of a continuing story.

Dickens, perhaps uniquely among great writers, has proved the source for the one-man-show and the epic, for the burlesque and the opera, and his words have been spoken variously by actors as distinct as Henry Irving and Donald Duck.

The fascination of H. Philip Bolton's *Dickens Dramatized* lies in the very density of the variety he charts. His book is, as he admits, a "hybrid" – both a calendar of dramatic performances and a bibliography of published texts and unpublished manuscripts. It also brings together lists of casts, snippets of reviews, films silent and films spoken, musicals, television and opera. Alas, the production of the book may remind readers of the typography of the village-hall programme but the record it offers is rich indeed. It ranges from the minimal versions of *A Christmas Carol* by un-

known playwrights staged annually from Sunderland to Seattle to the sumptuous television versions of *Hard Times* and *Bleak House*, from the Edwardian provincial rep to the modern West End, from the Broadstairs Festival to Broadway. Even the index manages to juxtapose Paris and the Parish Hall, Ilford; Konstantin Stanislavski and Dean Stanley.

In many ways Bolton's book tells us more about the theatre, and theatrical taste, than it does about Dickens. We are given introductions to sections on each novel, short story and tale, and Bolton also provides five opening essays which offer both a critical commentary on subsequent entries and a valuable historical context. He notes the frequency with which plays appeared on the stage before Dickens had actually completed the serialization of a story (frustrating to the novelist, understandably enough), and he describes the shifting fortunes of early box-office successes. It is interesting to find that despite the popularity of versions of *Oliver Twist*, a dramatization of its early rival, Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*, was performed more often in the nineteenth century, and that the title-characters in both plays were taken by women. It is also revealing that there are only twenty-eight entries in the *Hard Times* section, eighteen of which apply to the twentieth century (including a silent film of 1915 with Bransby Williams as Gradgrind); by way of contrast, the section on *David Copperfield* has 242 entries (it was first filmed in France in 1912) and that on *A Christmas Carol* 357 (it was last filmed in Hollywood in 1984). It comes as no surprise to learn of the dramatic sway of *A Tale of Two Cities* between 1880 and 1940. It is a pity that Bolton's brief does not allow him to outline the novel's origins in two other plays, Wilkie Collins's *The Frozen Deep* and Watts Phillips's *The Dead Heart*, but it is good to be reminded of the distinguished stage and celluloid Carbons and of Arthur Benjamin's prize-winning Festival of Britain opera. Bolton's many other gems have to be searched for. Two must suffice. The first Dickens novel to be televised was *Pickwick Papers* which appeared in July 1938 as *Bardell against Pickwick* and the longest-serving Dickensian actor seems to have been Jennie Lee. Miss Lee first played Jo in *Bleak House* in San Francisco in 1875; she was still playing Jo twenty-one years later, much to Bernard Shaw's chagrin. And in 1921 she returned to the role for a children's charity benefit at the Lyric Theatre, London.

son Singular and Howard Brenton's *Churchill Play*, among others, he has emerged from the experience with some decidedly odd notions about matters of central importance to their plots and meaning. Similarly, he ought to know that Alma Rattenbury, protagonist of Rattigan's *Cause Célèbre*, did not "murder her husband with the help of her lover". Her "sin" and this is the play's point – was sexual unorthodoxy only.

Perhaps it's nipping at the complaint that the Lyttelton Theatre isn't the Lyttelton or Oscar Lewenstein Oscar Lowenstein; or that Patrick Stewart didn't play Prince Hal as well as the king in the RSC's recent *Henry IV*; or that the child in Peter Nichols's *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* isn't a paraplegic; or that it was Mah-colm Mugeridge, not Colin McInnes, who steered the late Brendan Behan through a drunken BBC interview. There is, after all, far more in the encyclopaedia than right than wrong. Again, one must presumably allow Barnes his quirks of selection, even if that means there are entries solemnly investigating the meanings of "bums on seats" and "black-out" ("when all the stage lights are extinguished") or that room is found for Anton Lesser, Ronald Squire and Snoo Wilson, but gone for the late C. P. Taylor, Michael Redman or even Richard Eys, director-designate of the National Theatre. But the sum effect is not exactly to promote trust; and trust is any encyclopaedia's most fundamental need.

It's not surprising that Rattigan rates a longish entry in *A Companion to Post-War British Theatre*, nor, unfortunately, that this should be marred by minor error. Well before one has reached "R", one has begun to wonder whether Philip Barnes is as meticulous as he might be, given that his little encyclopaedia aims to be "an invaluable source of reference for the student of drama". If he has read Edward Bond's *Saved*, Alan Ayckbourn's *Asylum* Per-

Proper parents

Jan Dalley

BETSY BYARS
The Blossoms and the Green Phantom
137pp. Bodley Head. £4.95.
0 300 31041 1
MARILYN SACHS
Underdog
113pp. Oxford University Press. £4.95.
0 192 71571 2

Like the heroines of nineteenth-century novels, the young protagonists of children's fiction seldom have the full complement of parents. Stable family backgrounds do not allow children (as they did not allow nineteenth-century women) dramatic encounters alone in the outside world, and the loss of a parent (especially in some slightly exotic way) provides all the poignancy one could wish for, as well as opportunities for bravery, self-reliance and good storylines.

The Blossom family are no exception. The fact that they are "not just anybody" is clear from the start, because their father, Cotton Blossom, World Champion Single Steer Roper, was tragically killed by a steer in Ogallala, Nebraska. The sense of being different blinds Vern, Maggie and Junior, Vicki (their mother) and Pap (their grandfather) together in a notion of family honour strong enough to extend to the "Blossom promise", an oath so solemn that even Junior can't use it lightly.

So, in the Blossoms' lives, all the high drama takes place on the emotional front, while the actual story of the Green Phantom (the third book about the Blossoms) is relatively low-key. Junior's latest invention (a flying saucer) provokes no interest, even when he puts a "keep out" sign on the door. His emotional outburst causes Vicki to issue a Blossom order to the others, to get the balloon in the air. Meanwhile, feelings run high: Pap tries to rescue an abandoned puppy from a deep rubbish dump and falls in; Maggie gets her first kiss

while climbing a tree with Ralph, a neighbouring boy with an artificial leg; Vicki has a tantrum; Vern discovers that the home of his better-off friend Michael might be less idyllic than he had thought; Junior is beside himself with despair and delight – even the dog throws a jealous fit at the advent of the new puppy.

This atmosphere of heightened, and highly articulated, sentiment manages to avoid excessive sentimentality, though, largely because Betsy Byars's dialogue is good and the story moves at a strong pace. And despite being "different", the Blossoms are very believable.

Marilyn Sachs's *Underdog* has a classic orphaned heroine grappling alone with the world. The book opens with the death of eleven-year-old Izzy's father; her mother died years ago, her various stepmothers have other plans for their lives. She is taken in by an uncle and aunt she barely knows, a polite and uneasy guest in the immaculate apartment of this childless career-minded couple. Some family photos they show her bring back memories of a dog she'd once had, called Gus, and, as if in search of some vestige of a loving past, Izzy sets off to find out what became of him. Her re-appearance in the superclean flat, refusing to be parted from a hairy, black and inconvenient dog, brings the story to a crisis: but unwanted child and unwanted animal both enjoy a (qualified) happy ending.

This is a weepie, but a weepie with class. In Izzy, Sachs draws a convincing picture of a child who has learned to survive by being "no trouble", whose most common phrase is "That's okay, I'm fine", who knows how to go and load the dishwasher at exactly the moment the adults start to row; she also conveys the emotional cost of that kind of behaviour. Izzy's transference on to the dog (who turns out not to be Gus) of her own feelings of rejection, and her determination to "parent" the orphaned animal, are by no means far-fetched; her sudden rebellion against being "no trouble" is plausible too. She and "Gus" are going to be quite a lot of trouble: spare a thought for the unfortunate uncle and aunt.

A good shepherd

Alan Brownjohn

ROBERT WESTALL
Un Burial
157pp. Viking Kestrel. £6.95.
0 670 81537 3

Mystified by a spear-like piece of metal sticking out of a cairn high up on what local folk call "Fiend's Fell", Jack Norton's shepherd, the seventeen-year-old Ralph, starts removing stones. Soon he uncovers the glass coffin of a cat-like creature buried with a weapon, six magic eggs which unscrew and yield up pastes with uncanny powers, and two helmets. Donning one of them, he is immediately conveyed to a moment in the past when a race of higher beings, benevolent space warriors called the Fefethil, buried two of their leaders, Prepop and Sephotic, on planet Earth. Ralph has unwittingly opened Prepop's tomb, and must now bring down on the simple Cumbrian village community of Unthank alarming intergalactic forces of violence and greed, searching for the secrets of the great tomb of Sephotic.

Nearly all of this happens in the first two chapters of *Un Burial*, and Robert Westall goes on to deliver what it sadly promises: a distinctly ordinary sci-fi plot about star wars battles, a predictable triumph of good over evil in the nick of time at the end, and a conventional (if not a little heavy) ending. With an early, and rather heavy, galling the meanings of "bums on seats" and "black-out" ("when all the stage lights are extinguished") or that room is found for Anton Lesser, Ronald Squire and Snoo Wilson, but gone for the late C. P. Taylor, Michael Redman or even Richard Eys, director-designate of the National Theatre. But the sum effect is not exactly to promote trust; and trust is any encyclopaedia's most fundamental need.

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This narrative method is skilfully handled; but it tends to leave Ralph, with his burden of moral responsibility and his unexceptionable judgments on the follies of mankind ("Vietnam and Biafra, Lebanon and Nicaragua") as something of a hollow, symbolic centre to the book. His loner's voice of simple reasonableness (calmly putting in their place oafish farmers, fell-walkers and the local constabulary) sounds artificial. More real are his girlfriend, Ruby, who works at the check-out at the supermarket down in Penrith, his splendidly daunting mother, and the idle Jack Norton, whom the army bribe to keep quiet about happenings on the fell which they can neither grasp nor control.

Most real are not those moments when the Wawake are about to arrive and there is "a funny feeling of the air falling apart", but the times when things hold together. There are alert and absorbing accounts of fell and village, real weather and animals and people, and – in the best sequence in the book – a notable portrayal of a working festival of sheep-dipping. The space fantasy is often compelling, with a particular handsomeness of detail inside the galactic battleships. But the novel works most convincingly when it brings down Ralph from space warfare and sets him solidly back among the inhabitants of his community and their daily occupations. On that sure ground Robert Westall is as entertaining as before, understanding and conveying the texture and the pace of existence in moorland Cumbria as exactly as he does that of his native Tynemouth in his best fictions.

Reading for Enjoyment is the title of a series of four books recommending reading for young readers. Operating within specific age-ranges, the booklets – four editors, Tony Bradman (0-6), Vivien Griffiths (7-11), Fiona Waters (12-15) and Alan Myers (16 and up); choose about ninety titles each and give brief commentaries. The booklets are published by Baker Book Services, Manfield Park, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey, at £1.25 each. The series is available in paperback.



In this picture are 810 things beginning with the letter p, including the Painter, Mike Wilks, whose *Ultimate Alphabet*, first published in 1986, has been reissued in paperback (Pavilion/Michael Joseph, £3.95, 1 85145 181 1). Published with the Alphabet is a Workbook containing a list of all the 7,777 words depicted by Wilks.

Occupational hazards

Neil Philip

GEOFFREY TREASE
Tomorrow is a Stranger
144pp. Heinemann. £7.50.
0 434 96764 5

Geoffrey Trease has been writing novels for children for over fifty years; his tally of published books approaches 100. Yet he has never been content to repeat himself or to cater blandly to predictable tastes. He has remained a writer first, absorbed by the technical problems of effectively expressing what he wants to say. He has also given thought to what makes children turn the page. The result is a craftsmanship which even in his lesser books can teach most children's authors a much-needed lesson in directness, economy and clarity. From the opening sentences of his latest book – "It was fun at first. The gnawing fear came later" – the reader is gripped.

Tomorrow is a Stranger is set in Guernsey in the Second World War and tells the story of the German Occupation through the eyes of two children, Paul and Tessa. Their growing friendship is set against a background of increasing restriction, deprivation and – when they become involved in producing an underground news-sheet – danger. This is the heart of the book: the tension between growth and decline. It is painful to read, as the islanders

enter the last lap of the war, of Paul and Tessa's developing emotions undermined by wasting health and strength.

The wider political and military picture is only glimpsed through subplots such as the disappearance of the Austrian teacher Miss Goldschmidt. Through such episodes Trease makes clear the barbarity of the Nazi ethic, but he does not present the Germans as bogeymen. The ordinary soldiers are not brutal, and at the Liberation Trease mingles with the joy a strain of pity for the defeated: "columns of pallid soldiers, shabby and strange-looking without their helmets and equipment, marching down to embark in the vessels that would carry them into captivity". And in those columns is the officer Kurt Fischer, whose gentle and cultured good humour has balanced the repressive sternness of his superiors.

Though *Tomorrow is a Stranger* does not have either the innovative vigour of *Bows Against the Barons* or the shaded subtleties of *The Red Towers of Granada*, it is a workmanlike addition to Trease's output. Historical detail is deftly assembled to establish the special atmosphere in which the story unfolds, but the reader's attention is focused on the characters, not on the background. Some readers may find the retrospective tone of the narrative disappointingly low-key after the immediacy of the opening, but the refusal to be sensational gives this book a quiet dignity which many will enjoy.

Into the mouth of Hell

Deborah White

GERALDINE McCaUGHREAN
A Little Lower than the Angels
133pp. Oxford University Press. £6.95.
0 192 71561 5

A young boy falls from the roof of a church and swings, suspended by his ankle, above the pocket-marked face of his master, the Stone Mason; the Stone Mason takes hold of the boy's hair and dashes him against the wall. So begins this enthralling novel for unsqueamish nine to thirteen-year-olds. The setting is East Anglia in the Middle Ages; the boy, Gabriel, an apprenticed stone-cutter, runs away during a performance of a Mystery play and leaps to freedom through the gaping mouth of Hell where God awaits him, literally, with open arms. For nothing is as it first appears in this original novel: God, played by Garvey, turns out to be an unscrupulous charlatan, whereas Lucie, who plays the Devil and looks like him, is far more Christian and cares deeply about the Mystery Plays and their continuation. Garvey instantly spots the commercial possibilities of Gabriel's angelic looks and by rigging the outcome of a "blind" tramp at a performance of

"Balaam and His Ass", establishes him as a miracle worker. The company's fortunes prosper until the Mason catches up with it and starts blackmailing Garvey. As winter approaches the players camp in a deserted village where they are sought out by a mysterious visitor and commissioned to perform on his estate. When the performance is about to begin it becomes apparent that the entire audience is infected by the plague and Gabriel watches in horror from his stage cloud as the stricken multitude approaches. "They squeezed across the narrow bridge ten abreast – one hideous, brown, pestilential beast with a hundred buckling legs."

The shadow of the plague lifts, the company reassembles and Gabriel's long-standing wish comes true when the players arrive at his home town and he is reunited briefly with his parents.

Geraldine McCaughrean's first novel for children follows closely upon the successful restaging of a Mystery Play Cycle by the National Theatre Company and a general revival of interest in the genre. It depicts medieval rural England with all the rollicking vitality of a painting by Bruegel. Gabriel, bitterly disappointed when he discovers that he is only a bogus angel after all, is that infallible subject of fictional romance, the runaway, and a likeable mixture of charm, cunning and narcissism.

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

L. R. WRIGHT
Sleep While I Sing
211pp. Collins. £8.95.
0 100 232137 0

Corpse of a savagely murdered unknown young woman is found in the woods off a country road in rural British Columbia. Case is investigated by Staff Sergeant Karl Alberg, who finds his task made more difficult when the girl he loves, local librarian Cassandra Mitchell, falls for television actor Roger Galbraith, an outrageously handsome hunk and also one of the chief suspects. Interesting background, intriguing characters, and a plot which is as good as it needs to be.

JANE T. DALEY
All Good Men
190pp. Chatto and Windus. £9.95.
0 7011 3156 X

Moderate Labour MP Peter Quinton is fighting for reselection by the local party of his North London constituency. It's a dirty contest, but one which is taken to a different level when his left-wing rival is found in party headquarters with his head bashed in. Detection, though not ignored, is far less important than local party politics, to which the author takes a wickedly sharp scalpel, dipped in hydrochloric acid. A witty, well-written debut.

MICHAEL GILBERT
Trouble
255pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £9.95.
0 340 40674 7

The security forces suspect that the IRA is about to smuggle explosives into London, in preparation for the Christmas bombing season. At the same time, in a south-eastern district of the city, racial antagonism between two teenage gangs moves towards a climax. Michael Gilbert weaves the two stories

together with his customary smooth, fluent narration, and at the same time reveals yet again how expert he is at creating the atmosphere of a profession - here, for example, the law, the army and the police force.

COLIN MACKINNON
Finding Hoseyn
320pp. Century Hutchinson. £10.95.
0 7126 9583 4

Assassination of an Israeli agent on a back street in Tehran in 1977 sets newspaperman Jim Morgan off on a long chase through Europe and the Near and Middle East to unravel a conspiracy of hideous complexity. The Iranian background is stunningly well done - the author spent six years in the country - and he has picked up an impressively elliptical, allusive narrative method from le Carré. Almost to be recommended without reservation, but there's a slight whiff of the academic about it, and the period, too, is an odd one to choose, with Khomenei lurking just over the horizon.

WILLIAM J. CAUNITZ
Suspects
374pp. Century Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 7126 1594 6

Joseph P. Gallagher, a lieutenant in the Queens Narcotics District of the NYPD, is calling on Yetta Zimmerman, who owns a candy store in Brooklyn, to give her a birthday cake, when an old man carrying a shopping bag walks into the shop and blasts them both with an automatic shotgun. Lieutenant Anthony Scanlon, who's lost a foot in the line of duty, and is going through a bad period, lovelife-wise, as a result, leads the investigation. The intrigue's perhaps a mite fancy, but the atmosphere could hardly be more realistic: the author was thirty years with the NYPD himself, and on the strength of this, his second novel, he bids fair to become the East Coast Wambaugh.

TLS Listings

A comprehensive weekly selection
of new and forthcoming books received by the TLS

Anthropology

Clammer, John, editor Beyond the New Economic Anthropology (SUNY Series in the Anthropology of Work). Macmillan. 211pp. £27.50. 0 333 38857 7. 3/9/87.
Johnson, Allen W., and Timothy Earle The Evolution of Human Societies: From foraging group to agrarian state. Stanford UP. 360pp. \$39.50. 0 8047 1339 1. 10/6/87.
Ladurie, Emmanuel Le Roy: translated by Brian Pearce Jasmin's Witch. Aldershot: Scolar. 222pp.; plates. £27.50. 0 85967 706 0. 2/9/87.

Ong, Ahwa Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline (SUNY Series in the Anthropology of Work). Albany: State University of New York Press. 268pp. \$39.50 (hardcover), \$12.95 (paperback). 0 88706 380 2 (hc), 0 88706 381 0 (pb). 3/8/87.

Architecture

Jakle, John A. The Visual Elements of Landscape. Amherst: Massachusetts UP. 200pp. £33.25 (hardcover), £14.25 (paperback). 0 87023 566 4 (hc), 0 87023 567 2 (pb). 7/87.
Macaulay, James The Classical Country House in Scotland 1660-1800. Faber. 217pp., illus. £25. 0 571 14616 3. 3/1/87.
Morgan, Ann Lee, and Colin Naylor, editors Contemporary Architects (Contemporary Arts Series). St James Press. 1,038pp., illus. £39. 0 982289 26 0. 2/7/87.

Art

Archer, Mildred, Christopher Rowell and Robert Skelton Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle. Herbert Press / National Trust. 144pp.; plates. £14.95. 0 906969 67 8. 3/9/87.
Buckler, William E. Walter Pater: The critic as artist of ideas. New York UP. 350pp. \$45. 0 8147 1092 1. 2/7/87.
Burke, Bill, photographer; essay by Raymond Carver Portraits. Collins Harvill. 59pp.; plates. £15. 0 00 272056 6. 17/8/87.
Hudson, Kenneth Museums of Influence. Cambridge UP. 220pp. £15. 0 521 30534 9. 13/8/87.
Levit, Helen, photographer; essay by Robert Coles in the Street: Chalk drawings and messages, New York City 1958-1984. City UP. 110pp. £10.95. 0 900000 100 0. 1/9/87.
Long, Adolf, translated by Jane O. Newman and John H. Smith Spoken into the Void: Collected essays (1897-1900) (Oppositions Books). MIT. 146pp., illus. £11.25 (paperback). 0 262 12097 6 (hc), 0 262 63057 X (pb). 7/87.
Morse, Belinda John Hanson Walker: The life and times of a Victorian artist. Gloucester: Sutton. 188pp.; plates. £10.95 (paperback). 0 86299 354 7. 7/87.
Rogerson, Mark The Daily Scandal: An investigation. Gollancz. 189pp., illus. £12.95. 0 575 03786 5. 20/8/87.
Usherwood, Paul, and Jenny Spencer-Smith Lady Butler: Battle artist 1846-1933. Gloucester: Sutton / National Army Museum. 192pp.; plates. £9.95 (paperback). 0 86299 355 5. 7/87.

Biography, letters and diaries
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Business

Jackson-Cox, Jacqueline, John McQueney and J.E.M. Thirlwell Strategies, Issues and Events in Industrial Relations: Disclosure of Information in context. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 216pp. £25. 0 7102 0783 2. 3/9/87.
Skivington, James Managing to Survive: How to outsmart the one minute manager. Poole: Javelin. 124pp. £2.95 (paperback). 0 7137 1986 9. 2/7/87.

Classics

Fitch, John G. Seneca's "Hercules Furens": A critical text with introduction and commentary. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP. 489pp. \$54.50. 0 8014 1876 3. 2/7/87.
Macdonald, Ronald R. The Burial-Places of Memory: Epic underworlds in Vergil, Dante, and Milton. Amherst: Massachusetts UP. 233pp. \$20. 0 87023 558 3. 7/87.
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Economics

Holland, Stuart The Market Economy: From micro to macroeconomics. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 343pp. £25 (hardcover), £12.95 (paperback). 0 297 78618 0 (hc), 0 297 78639 9 (pb). 10/9/87.
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Roach, Agnes Athletes and Artists Stories. New York UP. 81pp. \$25. 0 8147 7400 8. 21/7/87.
Sackville-West, Vita, Rebecca West and M. J. Parry (Molly Keane). All Passion Press. The Return of the Soldier: Two Days in Angon. (Virago Omnibus II). Virago. 57pp. £12.95. 0 86068 927 1. 2/10/87.
Salmon, Elan Ode of Hope. Gollancz. 37pp. £12.95. 0 575 03983 3. 3/9/87.
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Trenier, Nigel Columba. Hodder and Stoughton. 220pp. £11.95. 0 340 6699 7. 7/9/87.

Fiction in English translation

Manto, Saadat Hassan; translated by Khalid Hasan Kingdom's End and other stories. Yarn. 257pp. £11.95/£18.95. 0 86091 183 7. 3/9/87.
Perec, Georges; translated by David Bellos Life: A user's manual. Collins Harvill. 380pp. 0 00 271463 9 (hc), 0 00 271464 7 (pb). 1/9/87.

History, general

Machirano, Alan The Culture of Capitalism. Oxford: Blackwell. 254pp. £19.50. 0 631 13626 6. 27/8/87.
Reinhartz, Jehuda Living with Antisemitism: Modern Jewish Responses (Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series). Hanover, NH: New England UP. 498pp. £32.75/£34 (hardcover). 0 87451 388 X (hc), 0 87451 412 6 (pb). 13/8/87.

History, modern

Adams, Henry; edited by Earl N. Harbert History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson. New York: Library of America / Cambridge UP. 1,308pp. £30. 0 904930 34 8. 0 521 32483 1. 13/8/87.
Ham, Gary R. The United States' Emergence as a Southeast Asian Power, 1940-1950. Guilford: Columbia UP. 448pp. \$45. 0 231 06190 0. 3/9/87.
Murphy, Graham Founders of the National Trust. Bantam: Christopher Helm. 148pp., illus. £14.95. 0 7470 2202 X. 27/8/87.
Omara-Ottun, Amil Politics and the Military in Uganda 1980-1985 (St Antony's / Macmillan Series). Macmillan. 218pp. £29.50. 0 333 41980 4. 17/9/87.
Rostler, Clinton 1787: The Grand Convention. Norton. 433pp. £6.95/£10.95 (paperback). 0 393 02475 X (hc), 0 393 30404 3 (pb). 19/8/87.
Travers, Tim The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the emergence of modern warfare 1900-1918. Allen and Unwin. 300pp. £25. 0 04 942205 7. 23/7/87.
Wright, Gordon France in Modern Times, 4th edition. Norton. 494pp. £12.50/£19.50 (paperback). 0 393 95582 6. 12/8/87.

History, contemporary

Killingray, David, and Richard Rathbone, editors Africa and the Second World War. Macmillan. 283pp. £29.50. 0 333 38258 7. 28/8/86.
Lundstedt, Geir; translated by Gail Adams Kvam East West North South: Major developments in international politics 1945-1986. Oslo: Norwegian UP, dist by Oxford UP. 308pp. £9.95 (paperback). 0 20 18354 8. 23/7/87.